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Item 7 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Coordination, programme and other questions: long-term programme of support for Haiti

Letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement by the States members of the Rio Group and of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) entitled "Towards a new paradigm of cooperation", issued on 8 April 2009 in preparation for the Conference on the Economic and Social Development of Haiti to be held on 14 April 2009 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council under the agenda item "Long-term programme of support for Haiti".

(*Signed*) Claude **Heller**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/2009/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and Spanish]

Donors Conference on the Economic and Social Development of Haiti

"Towards a new paradigm of cooperation"
Washington, D.C., 14 April 2009

Statement by the States members of the Rio Group and of the Caribbean Community

The Permanent Representatives of the States members of the Rio Group and of the Caribbean Community to the United Nations,

1. Reaffirmed their full support for the "Conference on the Economic and Social Development of Haiti — Towards a new paradigm of cooperation", which will take place in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 2009, taking into account that the socioeconomic development of Haiti and thus the stability of the country require the sustained cooperation of the international community. Therefore they urged donors and other cooperation partners to increase their support to the country through bilateral, regional or multilateral mechanisms established to such effect.

2. Highlighted the preparatory work carried out by the Haitian Government, donors and other cooperation partners at the technical meeting that took place in Ottawa on 2 and 3 March 2009.

3. Congratulated the Haitian Government on the design of an action plan within the framework of the National Strategy Plan for Growth and Poverty Reduction and the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment. These actions are a clear priority of the Haitian Government regarding the work of the Conference.

4. Expressed their wish that the decisions to be adopted during the Conference would contribute to a better alignment of the priorities of the Haitian Government and the offers of donors and other cooperation partners in a common partnership framework based on the principles of shared responsibility and efficiency.

5. Welcomed the inclusion within the agenda of issues related to the strengthening of the Haitian budget as an appropriate instrument for channelling international financial support. This will enable the Haitian Government to achieve a better coordination of that support and a better visibility of the work of the Government by the population.

6. Stressed that the contributions by non-governmental organizations should be channelled in accordance with national needs and priorities established by the Government of Haiti.

7. Reaffirmed their support for the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in support of the Haitian Government and people.

8. Expressed their firm decision to continue supporting the Government of Haiti in its efforts for the improvement of security, protection and promotion of human

rights and the strengthening of institutions, fundamental pillars to consolidate democratic governance in the country and to lay the foundations of a sustainable, just and equitable economic development.

9. Took note of the progress made in achieving a coordinated programme of Latin American cooperation for strengthening the Haitian National Police, in particular, of the meetings held in Santiago and Port au Prince and the establishment of a working group, which is currently devoted to finalizing a plan of action aimed at coordinating police cooperation, including new cooperation initiatives, and making full use of available resources for police training. In this regard, the Permanent Representatives stressed the need to include this issue on the agenda of future donor conferences.

New York, 8 April 2009

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Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: thematic discussion

Theme of the 2009 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council: Current global and national trends and their impact on social development, including public health

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The world economy is in the most severe financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. Virtually all economies will see a marked slowdown in 2009, with the contraction in developed economies translating into weaker growth in all other countries. The slowdown is being rapidly transmitted through trade, which it is estimated will decline by roughly 9 per cent in 2009. Unemployment rates are rising in many countries, straining national budgets and putting pressure on household disposable incomes. In many developing countries, the negative impact of the crisis on employment constitutes a major setback in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The impact of the global financial and economic crisis seems to have exacerbated the effects of the earlier food and energy crises, which, according to some estimates, pushed between 130 million and 155 million people into poverty.

The present report analyses the impacts of those trends on social development, focusing on poverty and hunger; social cohesion; public spending on social areas, such as social protection, safety nets, education and health; job security; and food security. The report pays special attention to the implications of the current trends for health-related goals and makes a number of recommendations on how to deal with the attendant challenges.

* E/2009/100.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report focuses on (a) current global and national trends, especially in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis and fluctuations in the prices of fuel and food; (b) how those trends are having an impact on social development; (c) the specific implications of those trends for the pursuit of public health goals, including the realization of the objective of "Health for All" articulated strongly by the World Health Organization; and (d) how to address emerging challenges in the short, medium and long term.

2. The present report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General for the annual ministerial review on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health".

II. Current trends

3. The world economy is in the most severe financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. After several years of robust global growth, the world economy is forecast to contract by about 2.0 per cent in 2009. Under a more pessimistic scenario, however, gross world product is anticipated to decline by 3.5 per cent this year.[1] Virtually all economies will see a marked slowdown in 2009, with the contraction in developed economies translating into weaker growth in all other countries. Of particular concern is the fact that growth in many developing countries will fall below the level that is needed in order to make meaningful progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

4. A sharp decline in international trade flows, a collapse in commodity prices, a drop in international tourism and a moderation in remittances have contributed to a significant deterioration in the current-account balances of many developing countries. At the same time, there has been a substantial reversal of capital flows to emerging countries, which combined with a surge in external financing costs, is hampering investment activities, creating downward pressure on national currencies and leading to balance-of-payments crises in many emerging economies.

5. The global slowdown is being rapidly transmitted through trade. The World Trade Organization estimates that the volume of global exports will decline by roughly 9 per cent in 2009, with exports from developed economies falling by some 10 per cent on average and exports from developing countries shrinking by 2-3 per cent.

6. An additional constraint on economic activity stems from the tight conditions in corporate credit markets. Retail businesses and industrial firms are finding it increasingly difficult to finance their business operations in view of tighter lending conditions, in many cases threatening their existence and jeopardizing millions of jobs. Consequently, unemployment rates are rising in many countries, straining social expenditures and putting pressure on household disposable incomes, which could lead to further economic contraction as a result of continued tightening of household spending. In many developing countries, the negative impact of the crisis on employment constitutes a major setback to efforts to achieve the Millennium

[1] "World economic situation and prospects as of mid-2009", forthcoming from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Development Goals, in particular the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Preliminary estimates by the International Labour Organization in late 2008 indicated that the number of unemployed would rise from 179 million in 2007 to 203-231 million in 2009.[2]

7. According to the vulnerability assessment by the World Bank, about 40 per cent of developing countries are highly exposed to the poverty effects of the financial crisis, while an additional 56 per cent of countries are moderately exposed. Only one quarter of the exposed countries have a reasonable fiscal capacity to undertake counter-cyclical spending. Moreover, one third of those countries with reasonable fiscal capacity are aid-dependent and will require external support to finance increased spending. Three quarters of the exposed countries have limited fiscal capacity and require assistance to protect poor households.[3]

8. Oil prices averaged about $94 per barrel for 2008, and average prices are likely to be about $50 per barrel during 2009. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries estimates that oil revenues for its States members will total $400 billion, less than half their 2008 value of $900 billion. That will have a negative impact on fiscal and current-account balances in those countries and on their ability to fund social development activities. On the other hand, it will ease the pressure on the budgets of oil-importing countries.

9. Although they remain relatively high and volatile, agricultural commodity prices have fallen significantly since mid-2008. The food price index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has fallen over 34 per cent, from a peak of 214 in June 2008 to 141 in March 2009. The financial crisis, and more significantly, the global recession have contributed to the significant fall in agricultural commodity prices. Despite the decline in international prices, domestic food prices remain very high in several developing countries, affecting the access of low-income population groups to food.

10. Meanwhile, the threat of climate change looms large. A number of recent studies have pointed out that the pace of change is much faster than earlier predicted. While efforts towards the realization of commitments made under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change continue, negotiations have started on the next step of the agreement to be reached in Copenhagen in December 2009. All evidence points to the need for significant collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the need to reach a comprehensive agreement at Copenhagen that includes the environmental and developmental challenges of addressing climate change.

11. In the current time of great uncertainty, it was reassuring that the leaders of the Group of 20 expressed at the recent London summit their commitment to fight against protectionist pressures and to maintain their efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, they made a strong commitment to support social protection and to build a resilient, sustainable and green recovery.

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[2] International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends for Women* (Geneva, International Labour Office, March 2009).

[3] Louise Cord and others, "The global economic crisis: assessing vulnerability with a poverty lens", policy note (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2009).

III. Impact of current trends on social development

A. Effect on poverty and hunger

12. With lower economic growth, estimates from the World Bank for 2009 suggest that 46 million more people will fall below the $1.25-a-day poverty line and an extra 53 million people will be trapped on less than $2 a day, compared with the estimates from before the crisis unfolded.[4] The global financial and economic crisis has been superimposed on the rapid surge in food and energy prices experienced in 2008, which pushed between 130 million and 155 million people into poverty.[5]

13. High food prices have caused severe damage to health and nutrition levels and have increased the vulnerability of poor rural households. The global financial and economic crisis is another shock that is likely to have severe implications for hunger across the globe. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, higher food prices pushed 115 million people into hunger in 2007 and 2008, increasing the total number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition to 963 million people.

14. Amid such conditions, there is serious doubt regarding the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty and hunger in the world by 2015. The financial and economic crisis is likely to affect all income groups, while high food prices will particularly impact the poorest segments of society. The urban poor are probably most at risk because of the impact the crisis will have on employment, especially in income-sensitive sectors such as construction, manufacturing and tourism, as well as on wages. Government expenditures and social protection systems. Rural areas are likely to be most affected by a decline in the volume and price of commodities produced in rural areas and by lower transfers from urban areas or overseas.

B. Effect on social cohesion

15. During the current time of economic hardship, social cohesion is under threat, with rising social tensions, an increase of violence in general and an increase in violence against women in particular. Violence against women reduces the capacity of victims/survivors to contribute productively to the family, the economy and public life, as noted in the in-depth study of the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women.[6] It also drains resources from social services, including health-care agencies, the justice system and employers and lowers the overall educational attainment, mobility and innovative potential of the victims/survivors, their children and even the perpetrators of such violence. Researchers have

[4] World Bank, "Crisis hitting poor hard in developing world", press release, 12 February 2009.

[5] It should be noted that the use of purchasing power parity exchange rates may seriously underestimate the impact of the food crisis on poverty.

[6] A/61/122 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1.

conservatively estimated the global costs of violence against women to be in the billions of dollars annually.[7]

16. Moreover, increased unemployment, rising poverty and a general sense of despair can potentially give rise to social conflict. Tensions between national and migrant populations may result. Migrants are at risk of becoming scapegoats in times of crisis, amid rising resentment against foreign workers. Lack of social cohesion is likely to undermine efforts to deal with the consequences of those crises and efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals. Governments will need to ensure that efforts to address unemployment and rising poverty also promote social cohesiveness, as social integration is essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

C. Public spending on social areas

17. The economic consequences of the current global financial and economic crisis will have serious negative impacts on social development, in particular on progress towards health-related and other Millennium Development Goals. Fiscal pressures in affluent countries may prompt cuts in official development assistance, which is an important source of health financing for many of the poorest countries. There are also the fiscal costs of adaptation to climate change, for which aid resources may be diverted. Fiscal revenues of low-income countries will also fall as a result of the economic downturn, which could force their Governments to cut back on social spending, with long-lasting effects on human development. Therefore, a conscious effort must be made to maintain or direct massive resources for public investments in infrastructure, food production, education and health in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

18. In response to the crisis, a few countries, including developing countries, have increased spending on education and health by either creating new programmes or increasing funding for old programmes (see boxes I and II below). Furthermore, school and hospital construction is part of the rural development programmes of several countries.

[7] Tanis Day, Katherine McKenna, and Audra Bowlus, *The Economic Costs of Violence against Women: An Evaluation of the Literature* (2005), compiled in preparation for the in-depth study of the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/expert%20brief%20costs.pdf).

Box I
South Africa

The Government of South Africa has introduced an expansionary budget, with the budget deficit set to rise to 3.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) as a countermeasure to grim economic prospects, while it maintains the course on longer-term development challenges. On the education front, the Government will make an additional R 8.1 billion available for hiring additional teachers and improving the remuneration of teachers. In addition, R 4 billion will be added to the school nutrition programme. On health services, a new unit to address the quality of service provision, the National Office for Standards Compliance, will be established. An additional R 1.8 billion will be available for the introduction of three new vaccines for children. Spending on HIV/AIDS programmes will exceed R 5 billion by 2009/2010. A further R 5.3 billion will be available for improving remuneration for health workers and increasing staff levels.

Source: Trevor A. Manuel, Minister of Finance, South Africa, budget speech 2009, 11 February 2009.

Box II
China

The Government of China introduced a stimulus package of RMB 4 trillion ($586 billion), an amount equivalent to 15 per cent of GDP, in November 2008. The spending is to be spread over two years. By March 2009, the Government had reviewed its plan and decided to place more emphasis on social welfare projects, rural development and technology advancement. Public infrastructure, such as railway, road, irrigation and airport construction projects, is allocated the largest share, of 38 per cent. The second largest share, of 25 per cent, is allocated to reconstruction in regions hit by the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008. Social welfare projects, including the construction of low-cost housing, the rehabilitation of slums and other social safety net projects, follow, with an allocation of 10 per cent. Rural development and technological advancement share the same allocation of 9 per cent each. As China is the third-largest economy in the world, sustaining economic growth at a reasonably robust level would contribute towards cushioning the impact of the global slowdown.

Sources: *Financial Times*, 10 November 2008; *The Economic Observer Online*, 7 March 2009.

19. Any reduction of social spending has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Additionally, women and girls are negatively affected by reductions in social services and protection programmes, such as in the areas of education and health. Adverse impacts on women in terms of health, nutrition and education will also have much greater intergenerational consequences.

20. In the formal sector, where social protection measures are linked to individual contributions by employees, there is a bias against women, owing to gender wage gaps and the fact that women spend less time in formal employment as a result of interruptions for childbearing and childcare. Some Governments have addressed the disadvantages experienced by working mothers through the allocation of minimum pensions, redistribution towards low-income groups and credits given for years spent caring for children.[8] Such efforts could be curtailed in a time of economic downturn, however. In addition, displacement from (or substantially reduced income in) the formal sector pushes people into informal sector activities, which may increase supply but potentially reduce incomes. It is imperative to have a properly designed social safety net, which should provide a predictable set of institutionalized mechanisms to help households in distress cope with shocks.

21. The impact of the current economic crisis is further felt on national pension systems. Ageing populations and weak administration, combined with early retirement and unaffordable benefits, place extra burdens on both pension balances and overall public finances. In developing countries, already limited coverage of pension systems leaves the majority of the older population without social protection.

22. Although the importance of public spending on social areas is well recognized, many Governments have limited options, owing to decreasing Government revenues and increasingly difficult debt financing. Moreover, if rapid inflation — as in the past two years — is factored in, public spending on social development is on the verge of stagnation in real terms. While social aid funds have been established in several countries, fiscal austerity is likely to affect the endowment of such funds.

D. Job security

23. Job losses are also increasing rapidly, with further layoffs already announced in industrialized and developing economies. As noted earlier, preliminary estimates from the International Labour Organization indicate that the number of unemployed will rise to between 203 million and 231 million in 2009. In Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, unemployment rates were already 6.8 per cent in December 2008, 1.1 percentage point higher than a year earlier. In developing countries, at least 50 million jobs are likely to be lost in 2009. As more than half of the workforce of developing countries is already employed in conditions that fall short of decent work, the potential impact of the economic crisis on the livelihoods of the working poor will be much deeper than is reflected in a rise in unemployment rates. The rate of underemployment is also expected to increase sharply.

[8] Emily Esplen, *Gender and Care: Overview Report*, BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom, February 2009.

24. Volatility in financial markets has particularly harmful effects on prospects for decent work. It should be noted that, even during the recent economic expansion, average real wages stagnated or fell. Past experience shows that the most vulnerable are the most affected during a downturn, through job losses and cuts in wages.[9]

25. There are numerous gender differentials related to decreased job security. Women have less job security than men, as they are more often employed in the casual and informal sector. When job security is reduced and incomes fall, girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school to contribute to household and on-farm labour. That creates a long-term deficit and imbalance in the human resource base, making it more difficult for countries to recover from economic crisis. Job loss creates poverty, and women and girls are more likely to be trafficked if family incomes disappear and subsistence thresholds are not met. In addition, women and girls who lose their livelihoods are often forced into transactional sex for food, shelter and goods, creating increased risks to their sexual and reproductive health as well as increased risks of gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection.

26. Concerning migrant workers, there have been advances in international cooperation and the normative framework related to social development, including, for example, the establishment of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which are placing the challenges and benefits of international migration and development at the forefront of the development agenda. In economic downturns, however, migrant workers are among the first to lose their jobs. Countries have taken action in order to protect their national labour markets from the impact of the financial crisis, with deleterious effects on migrant workers. Rising unemployment among immigrant populations also affects the level of remittances sent home.

E. Food security

27. There are serious concerns that the international community will become more sanguine about the food crisis, which is far from over. Food shortages are likely to resurface. It is therefore imperative that the commitments made to address the food crisis, including the impetus for strengthening the agricultural sector, be adhered to by all. Failure to do so may have serious development implications on nutrition, public health, trade and the environment. In 2008, the number of people suffering from chronic hunger reached 963 million, 70 per cent of whom lived in rural areas. At least half of the approximately 10 million child deaths that occur every year are linked to hunger and malnutrition. Structural problems, such as the lack of access to land, technology, markets, infrastructure, credit and risk-reducing mechanisms, remain major constraints for many smallholders to increasing their production.

28. The global food security crisis endangers the lives of millions of people, particularly the world's poorest, who live in countries already suffering from acute and chronic malnutrition.[10] Among the most vulnerable are women and children under 5 who suffer from diseases resulting from malnutrition and the consistent, irreversible physical and mental damage that affects them throughout their lifetimes.

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[9] International Labour Organization, International Institute for Labour Studies, *World of Work Report 2008: Income Inequalities in the Age of Financial Globalization*.

[10] See World Health Organization (http://www.who.int/food_crisis/en/).

Women have unequal access to income and credit facilities, which are essential to ensure access to an adequate, diverse and nutritious diet.

29. The macroeconomic impacts of the financial and economic crisis in developing countries will also have significant negative effects on their agriculture sectors and food security. The extent of the impact in developing countries will depend not only upon the aggregate slowdown in growth rates but also upon their difficulties in borrowing and their increasing dependence upon international credit and transfers to finance food imports and agricultural development.

30. Recognizing the urgency of addressing food security, world leaders gathered at the High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, held in Madrid on 26 and 27 January 2009, where they renewed commitments to halve the number of undernourished people in the world by 2015, as reflected in Goal One of the Millennium Development Goals.

31. The Madrid meeting reaffirmed international commitments to substantially increase financial resources and official development assistance. The meeting also underscored the urgent need to identify financing gaps and the additional resources needed for existing anti-famine mechanisms. In total, $5.5 billion was pledged. Between the Madrid meeting and the High-level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008, the international community has raised $23 billion.

F. Malnutrition and health challenges

32. Inadequate dietary intake and disease are the immediate causes of malnutrition. Inadequate food consumption heightens vulnerability to infectious diseases, which in turn can keep the body from absorbing adequate food. Those immediate causes stem from insufficient access to safe and wholesome food, poor maternal and child-rearing practices and inadequate access to clean drinking water, safe sanitation and health services. Food insecurity, ill health and suboptimal caring practices are all closely related to poverty. Poor people generally consume fewer than 2,100 calories per day. Lower-income households experience significantly higher rates of stunting and illness among preschool children and worse care practices than better off families. Taken together, chronic and acute child malnutrition, low birth weights, suboptimal breastfeeding and micronutrient deficiencies lead to the deaths of 3.6 million mothers and preschool children each year, accounting for 35 per cent of all preschooler deaths and 11 per cent of the global disease burden. Difficult pregnancies and illnesses caused by malnutrition cost developing countries $30 billion annually. The combined food and financial crises are likely to cause greater micronutrient deficiencies and increased instances of wasting, stunting and underweight.

33. Increased food prices have led to reductions in dietary quality, even among populations not normally considered food insecure; dietary quality deteriorates before dietary quantity. That dietary change is severely affecting the health and nutritional status of hundreds of millions of people, owing to the rapidly increasing prevalence and severity of micronutrient deficiencies among economically disadvantaged groups.

34. Older people have also been affected by the food crisis. Many older people cannot obtain decent work and lack basic income, making them one of the social groups that have been most vulnerable to the food crisis. They frequently have diets and eating habits that are different from those of younger people, with increasingly specific nutritional requirements in order to maintain organ systems with declining functionality. The elderly have more limited ability to access food in times of scarcity and high prices. In the absence of social safety nets, the most economically vulnerable, including the elderly, are hit first and perhaps the hardest.

IV. Specific implications for public health[11]

35. The current crisis comes at a time when public health is at a crossroad. There has been significant progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Child mortality has been reduced; treatment and prevention have improved for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, poliomyelitis and neglected tropical diseases; and primary education, which has a major long-term effect on health, has significantly expanded. Many challenges remain, however. Little progress has been made in maternal and newborn mortality, especially in Africa; nutrition has been relatively neglected; and, in many countries, less than half the population has access to adequate sanitation or essential medicines.

36. The current global trends and multiple crises are set to have profound implications for public health. Countries that are particularly at risk include countries that have required emergency assistance and those that depend heavily on donor funding for health. Countries affected by or emerging from conflict, or those with few financial reserves, weak institutions or damaged infrastructure are especially vulnerable. Others, particularly small island developing States, storm- and drought-prone countries and countries with extensive low-lying areas, have to face the economic downturn while coping with the imminent impact of climate change.

37. While the impact of the current crisis is still being analysed, experiences from the past suggest that the health of, as well as health services for, populations will worsen as unemployment rises, safety nets for social protection fall short, savings and pension funds erode and health spending drops. Many private health insurers will be forced to operate under tight margins, with the likely consequence of higher premiums and a reduction of benefits offered. The International Labour Organization estimates that more than one third of the global population has no possibility of receiving the health services it needs. Non-communicable diseases will likely increase. Prospective issues include mental illness, depression and anxiety and a possible jump in the use of alcohol and other harmful substances, owing to increased stress. The crisis requires special attention to the health impact on vulnerable populations, women, the elderly, and the young.[12]

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[11] This section draws upon World Health Organization information note/2009/1, 21 January 2009, "The Financial Crisis and Global Health", report of a high-level consultation, Geneva, 19 January 2009.

[12] World Health Organization, *Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity Through Action on the Social Determinants of Health: Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health* (Geneva, WHO Press, August 2008), available at http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/en/index.html.

38. Financial and economic policies are very closely linked with public health. The size of overall public spending influences the total amount allocated to the health sector. Spending allocations to education, water and sanitation are also critical, and economic growth, together with distribution, has a major impact on other key determinants of health, especially nutrition and education. The nature of many health interventions also makes them particularly sensitive to fiscal adjustments. Because of the imperative of ensuring continuity in services and the supply of drugs for treating major diseases, temporary reductions or interruptions in funding can have serious consequences for health outcomes. The nature of health spending, including the complexity of training and recruitment, increases the importance of predictable and forward-looking budgetary planning. Fiscal consequences from the current crisis thus have the potential to severely affect the health sector.

39. Public-health and social policies are equally interrelated. For example, the possible higher cost of health care will make health-care services less accessible to many people, which will have significant social and economic repercussions. There are especially close links between health, the labour market and income generation, since healthier workers have a higher productivity, and labour supply increases with lower morbidity and mortality. Loss of employment, on the other hand, results in loss of employment-linked health benefits.

40. Ultimately, all social determinants of health, such as nutrition, education and living and working conditions, could be impacted by the current multiple crises, while climate change poses increasing threats to health and the social determinants of health.

41. There is evidence that, in times of economic hardship, social cohesion comes under threat through increased social tensions and violent conflict. Each year millions of people die as a result of injuries caused by violence. Many more survive their injuries, but with permanent disabilities.

42. Public health provides a strong peace dividend in the aftermath of conflict. Many national and international practitioners have identified support for the provision of basic services, particularly in the area of health, as a recurring priority in countries emerging from conflict. While health initiatives alone cannot lead to the consolidation of peace, providing health care to populations living in war-torn areas is one way to strengthen reconciliation.[13] Early integration of public health into peacebuilding strategies and programmes is critical in order to ensure the continuation of efforts towards recovery and long-term development. Clear mechanisms and procedures for describing the health situation in peacebuilding settings should be developed.

A. Impacts on health spending

43. In recent years, several countries, notably in Africa, have taken advantage of economic growth and increased aid levels to raise health spending. That has facilitated progress towards achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals. The current crisis could put those achievements at risk and

[13] Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, Health and Conflict: Developing a knowledge-based foreign policy agenda, May 2008.

jeopardize future progress on health-related and other Millennium Development Goals.

44. The current crisis could affect health spending in several ways: slower economic growth may reduce overall public spending, including for health; access to capital may become more difficult as interest rates and risk premiums rise; and there is a likelihood of downward pressure on aid.

45. Past experience shows that, in times of economic downturn, some Governments opt to protect health spending or even increase it, while others shift away from investments in the social sector, often harming public health, development and security. In cases where health financing is reduced, financial barriers exclude the poor and the vulnerable from services, affecting many women and girls. Preserving health spending, in particular for the most vulnerable, is critical in times of crisis in order to ensure equitable access to care.

46. To reduce inequities in health and improve access to health services, efficient health protection pillars include responsive national health services, national health insurance and social or community-based insurance. Social protection in health involves financing mechanisms such as tax-funded health financing, including conditional cash transfers and vouchers; national and social health insurance, and private health insurance, such as community-based and employer schemes. Affordable social health protection should be promoted.

47. Aid for health more than doubled between 2000 and 2007, from $1.58 billion in 2000 to $4.34 billion in 2007.[14] Those levels of aid should be maintained. While the focus needs to be on achieving results, in times of crisis it may be the "poor performers" who need the most help. Aid effectiveness should also be a priority. Increased efforts to implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action (A/63/539, annex) are particularly important, as aid recipients need predictable and flexible funding that is aligned with national priorities.

48. The current crisis comes at a time when more actors are involved in the health sector and the types of financing mechanisms are more diversified. Such mechanisms include collective business initiatives, multi-stakeholder or public-private partnerships, innovative financing mechanisms, research and development alliances and integrated health system initiatives that rely on income from investments.[15] While those have allowed increased funding for the health sector, they are inherently pro-cyclical; thus their revenues are likely to fall during a recession. Sustaining funding for health through official development assistance will be crucial in the current time of crisis if low- and middle-income countries are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. To engage private industry and individuals to finance the battle against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, the International Drug Purchase Facility, UNITAID, has announced a new initiative with chief executive officers of the online travel industry to allow air travellers booking online to make a $2 per flight donation to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria efforts worldwide.

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[14] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Cooperation Directorate, online statistics.

[15] More data is needed on the effect of the economic downturn on faith-based and community organizations and other non-State providers of health care.

49. The multiplication of actors poses the risk of increasing fragmentation of strategies and policies. Vertical programmes have succeeded in attracting funds and making progress in their respective areas, but a more balanced approach will be required so that improvements are also made in health systems and basic health care.

50. The effects of the crisis on the balance of payments, through reduced export revenues and capital flows, as well as on exchange rates and inflation, also have an impact on health. The price of imported medicines, raw materials and medical equipment tends to increase with inflation and devaluation. Those dependent on long-term treatment particularly risk progressive impoverishment. Changes in the availability and cost of treatment can happen relatively quickly amid a rapidly worsening economic environment. Mechanisms such as the International Drug Purchase Facility, UNITAID, the GAVI Alliance and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria are significantly lowering prices for specific medicines and vaccines. Generic drug substitution can also counter cost increases.

51. The need to contain medical costs can also present an opportunity to increase efficiency, for example, by seeking synergies between different programmes, such as tuberculosis and tobacco control, and increasing the use of communication technologies.

52. Leaders in developed and developing countries, as well as international financial institutions, have made strong public political commitments to health and development. Member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union have made pledges to sustain their current level of aid. The Thirty-fourth Summit of the Group of Eight, held in Toyako, Hokkaido, Japan, from 7 to 9 July 2008, focused on health as a key area, setting forth the Toyako Framework for Action on Global Health. Aid from Group of Eight countries, however, is already lagging well behind the targets agreed to at the Group of Eight summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005. Even before the present crisis, projections suggested a need for an additional $34 billion in 2007 dollars by 2010 in order to meet the Gleneagles targets.[16] On the other hand, even if aid flows increase, if spending is restricted, as reported, for programmes supported by the International Monetary Fund in low-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa,[17] there will be limited health benefits.

53. In response to the call by the Secretary-General for action, an intergovernmental high-level task force on innovative international financing for health systems was launched at the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals on 25 September 2008. The task force will explore ways to encourage non-traditional donors and voluntary levies earmarked for health in poor countries, as well as ways to front-load official development assistance, and report to the Group of Eight summit to be held in La Maddalena, Italy, in July 2009. The final report will be available to the General Assembly in September 2009.

[16] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, *Aid Targets Slipping out of Reach?*, November 2008.

[17] Independent Evaluation Office of the International Monetary Fund, *The IMF and Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2007.

54. Overall, there is considerable scope for building awareness of the ways in which the current crisis affects health spending. A stronger evidence base, including gender-sensitive data, is needed to show the economic benefits from sustained investments in health, including the health of women.[11]

B. Change in household health-seeking behaviour

55. The most common effect in times of economic downturn is for households increasingly to seek health-care services from public sector providers. It is also likely that the need for health care will increase over time, particularly among poor households, owing to impacts on such aspects as nutrition and living environments. Unless public sector services are ensured adequate financial support in those circumstances, quality of care is likely to deteriorate at a time when publicly funded services are under pressure. That may be exacerbated by the possible risk of a "brain drain" of health professionals, which could be caused by the expansion of health services in developed countries under their stimulus packages while lower-income countries contract their health services under austerity programmes.

56. Often, many of the household health-seeking consequences of recession are hidden. For example, unemployment will have health consequences, owing to the loss of income and access to employment-linked health insurance schemes. Also, the first care likely to be dropped is funding for sexual and reproductive health and prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Individuals, particularly women, and households will be challenged to pay the user fees and costs of catastrophic illness. That will almost certainly negatively affect health-seeking behaviour and the utilization of health services, especially in the poorest quintiles, further deteriorating the health status of those populations. Other implications may include women dropping out of family planning programmes and services as a result of increased out-of-pocket expenses and a general increase in the overall price of sexual and reproductive health services, particularly contraceptives.

57. By reducing out-of-pocket health-care costs and promoting the utilization of health services, the availability of some payment mechanism for health — tax-based, insurance-based or, more typically, a mix — can reduce the impact of health shocks on households. During a financial and economic crisis, access to risk pools provided by taxation or health insurance for poor households can be critical; where the poor cannot pay, government or official development assistance contributions are vital.

58. Cash transfers, either conditional or unconditional, are another way of providing cash for poor families. Some of the most common conditions used to encourage health behaviours focus on health-care check-ups and the provision of nutritional needs, although unconditional transfers targeting women have been shown to result in increased spending on the health of their children. Cash transfers perform well in smoothing consumption by recipients during crises and in ensuring continued investment in health. A common drawback of all such targeted schemes is that they tend to be relatively unresponsive to changes in the need for assistance.

C. Opportunities for collaboration between and within countries to minimize negative impacts

59. The current financial and economic crisis is likely to affect health outcomes in a number of ways. Fiscal pressures are likely to lead to lower levels of health spending. The incidence of illness may be higher because of increased exposure to risk factors, both physical and psychological. The crisis changes the relative prices of commodities, which in turn will change household consumption patterns. Some health-care inputs have high import components, for example, pharmaceuticals, the prices of which are likely to increase substantially and the availability of which may decrease. Moreover, changes in employment patterns and incomes that occurred as a result of the crisis are likely to have an effect on health outcomes and the demand for health care.[18]

60. Suggested areas of action to ensure that the public health sector is protected from the negative impacts of the multiple crises are:

(a) **Implementation of large-scale internationally coordinated fiscal stimulus packages that are mutually reinforcing must be directed towards health goals and other Millennium Development Goals. A small percentage of the fiscal stimulus packages of developed countries could be allocated to low-income/adversely-affected countries;**

(b) **Government health spending should be maintained in times of crisis. Macroeconomic responses should be pro-poor and geared towards minimizing impacts on poor households. A challenge is to strike the right balance between essential curative services and preventive programmes;**

(c) **Countries should maintain their commitments to increase their aggregate level of aid. Aid for health and related sectors should be sustained so as to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Tapping innovative sources of funding should be further explored in order to raise additional funds for health. Implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action in the health sector are vital, as greater predictability of external financing becomes crucial;**

(d) **The response to the crisis needs to be multisectoral and requires the development of integrated health policies and programmes. Policy coordination will be required across several sectors — linking policies that stabilize prices, reducing the cost of buying food, helping people maintain health insurance payments and keeping children in school. Aiming to provide access to universal health care is a crucial component of that mix;**

(e) **In a time of economic downturn, the demand for public services will increase as patients tend to rely more on public sector provision. The public sector should have adequate financial and human resource support;**

(f) **Rigorous analysis and monitoring of the implications of the current crisis on health and development are needed, including through regional collaboration, in order to mitigate and manage problems as soon as possible;**

[18] The Health, Nutrition, and Population Family of the World Bank's Human Development Network, *Health Care During Financial Crisis: What can we Learn from the Indonesian National Socioeconomic Survey?*, discussion paper, July 2000.

(g) **Governments should recognize the role of civil society organizations as service providers and advocates and should fully integrate the resources and services they provide to national health systems;**

(h) **Public health is key in peacebuilding efforts to ensure long-term peace and sustainable development.**

V. Managing the impact of current global and national trends

61. Since October 2008, policymakers in developed countries have implemented various emergency plans. Massive public funding was made available to recapitalize banks, making Governments active players in financial markets through their partial or full ownership of failed financial institutions. In addition, after an aggressive loosening of monetary policy, fiscal policy measures have moved to the forefront in efforts to revive economic activity, with a number of countries having passed major fiscal stimulus packages.

62. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination has also announced a joint initiative to assist countries and the global community to overcome the crisis. On 5 April 2009, the Board announced nine joint initiatives to confront the multiple facets of the crisis and to accelerate the recovery. They include: (a) additional financing for the most vulnerable, through a joint World Bank-United Nations system mechanism, including through the vulnerability fund proposed by the World Bank; (b) the strengthening of programmes on food security; (c) the promotion of trade, including through the conclusion of the Doha round; (d) a green economy initiative; (e) a global jobs pact; (f) a social protection floor; (g) emergency action on meeting humanitarian needs and shoring up security and social stability; (h) the development of technological infrastructure to facilitate the promotion of and access to innovation; and (i) the strengthening of macroeconomic and financial surveillance and the implementation of an effective economic early warning system, as well as the urgent establishment of a United Nations systemwide vulnerability monitoring and alert mechanism.

A. Short-term measures at the global and national levels

63. **Government stimulus packages, though intended to reactivate the global economy, should be aligned with long-term sustainable development goals. Developed countries can make investments in infrastructure, renewable energy and energy efficiency as part of the fight against climate change. Similarly, developing countries can also align new fiscal stimuli with their long-term development goals.**

64. **Additional stable and predictable foreign aid flows will also be needed. Developed countries should meet their aid commitments without further delay. In addition, more stable aid flows should be achieved through enhanced donor coordination and multiannual agreements on levels of support to low-income countries. Direct fiscal support to developing countries that are suffering from severe fiscal constraints can be most effective in the current crisis situation.**

65. **Substantial increases in international liquidity and development financing are needed for developing countries to be able to refinance their outstanding debt and to cover fiscal and balance-of-payments gaps.**

66. **The increase in resources can be mobilized through issuing new special drawing rights, pooling international reserves, enhancing the lending capacity of multilateral development banks and accelerating delivery on existing aid commitments.**

67. **Additional financial resources should be provided, without procyclical policy conditionality, and such resources should be geared towards improved aid effectiveness and better aid predictability.**

68. **At the national level, efforts must be strengthened to avoid contraction of social spending, including on social protection, social safety nets, employment, education and health.**

69. **Even in low-income developing countries, a basic package of State-financed social transfers can be designed to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the poor and the vulnerable and should be seen as part of a long-term agenda of investing in people. It can also provide a significant fiscal stimulus to the economy.**

70. Although the precise impact of the crisis on international migration and remittances is still uncertain, there are already clear indications that many migrants have a high probability of losing their jobs and income, with commensurate effects on the flow of remittances, which form an important source of income to many poor families in the developing world. **The world community should ensure that the crisis does not lead to a backlash against migrants in receiving countries or an imposition of further restrictions on migration.** Such restrictions are usually imposed on unskilled workers and tend to exacerbate the suffering of poor people.

71. **With regard to health, a focus on primary health care and universal coverage, with an essential package of highly cost-effective interventions and services that focus on prevention, is necessary.**

72. **Alignment of fiscal stimulus packages with health goals and other Millennium Development Goals could include investments in capacity-building and the training of health professionals; service delivery, with a special focus on primary health care, including infrastructure; and information and knowledge tools designed to promote public health goals.**

73. **In terms of food security, there is a need to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations while at the same time building longer-term resilience by addressing underlying causes.** In the case of food and agricultural output, long-term investments include the expansion of rural infrastructure and the improvement of market access, as well as the conservation and replenishment of natural resources.

74. **In the short term, technical support is needed for taking immediate steps to improve the availability of and access to nutritionally adequate quantity and diversity of good quality, safe food and to provide nutritional support for the most food insecure and nutritionally vulnerable.** Investing in nutrition is one of the best strategies to implement in the current crisis, as it raises the growth prospects for developing countries in both the short and long terms owing to its positive impact on productivity, health and education.

75. **Successful agricultural policies can contribute to good health by producing both the food and the income needed for well-being, and successful health policies can benefit agriculture by protecting the agricultural labour force against disease.** For example, antiretroviral therapy to reduce the effects of HIV is one of the most important labour-saving technologies in African agriculture. A diversified agriculture, in turn, leads to greater resilience and an increased ability of farmers to respond to health problems. Diversification of rural economies into non-agricultural production is also needed as a means of reducing poverty.

B. Medium-to-long-term measures

76. **At the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, held in Doha from 29 November to 2 December 2008, Member States agreed that the Bretton Woods institutions must be comprehensively reformed so that they become more democratic and more responsive to current and future challenges. That decision should be pursued vigorously so as to increase the voice and the votes of the poorest countries.**

77. **The international community should recommit itself to the expeditious conclusion of the Doha round of trade negotiations, with pro-development outcomes. All efforts should be made to ensure that the world does not resort to protectionism and unfair trading practices.**

78. **Special funds or funding should be earmarked to ensure that spending on social areas is commensurate with the challenges of development, particularly in the area of human resource development.**

79. **Risk pooling in health should be strengthened, for an essential package of prevention and primary health-care services, through national single-payer arrangements, national and other forms of health insurance or other risk-pooling arrangements, coupled with modern approaches to results-based financing.** Where possible, user fees for primary health services, in particular for family planning, HIV and maternal health services, should be abolished. Abolishing user fees for education, in particular for primary education, would also be highly beneficial.

80. **Monitoring and health surveillance should also be strengthened in order to rapidly detect health impacts, and high-level mechanisms to mitigate impact should be put in place. An early alert system should be put in place in order to monitor the impact of the crisis on health systems and health conditions and to improve the coordinated response so as to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable groups.**

81. **It is vital to increase the equity and efficiency of health systems in order to improve the access of women to health services, including reproductive health services, and to reduce the burden of caregiving on women.**

82. **There is a need to strengthen capacity to design and implement agricultural technologies and best practices for scaling up interventions that improve the quality and diversity of foods as well as increase agricultural incomes and employment.**

83. Support should also be given to the incorporation of nutritional considerations into agricultural research and the adoption of technologies, and to the transfer and diffusion of varieties and proven small-farmer community-based technologies and techniques that will lead to better nutrition. There is a need to strengthen capacity to design and implement social protection policies and safety net programmes that protect and promote nutrition. There is also a need for building national institutional capacity to support nutrition and food safety policies and programmes.

84. The integration of gender perspectives into aid modalities and efforts to enhance aid delivery mechanisms should be encouraged. That involves using gender-responsive budgeting more effectively in order to ensure adequate resource allocation for the health of women in the context of the financial crisis. There is also a need to assess the economic costs of lack of attention to violence against women and to make health services more responsive to the prevention and treatment of violence against women. It is also important to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems to produce sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data for all health-related indicators, and to disseminate gender statistics widely in order to develop evidence-based, gender-sensitive social development policymaking.

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Item 7 (f) of the provisional agenda*
Coordination, programme and other questions: ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict

Letter dated 9 April 2009 from the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairperson of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission to the President of the Economic and Social Council

We have the honour to refer you to the statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration in Sierra Leone (PBC/3/SLE/4), issued on the occasion of the signing of a joint communiqué between the leading political parties in Sierra Leone.

The communiqué is the outcome of a bi-party dialogue facilitated by the United Nations in the aftermath of the incidents of inter-party violence in Sierra Leone of 13 to 16 March. It demonstrates a significant shared commitment between the two largest political parties to the consolidation of democracy and peace in Sierra Leone.

In accordance with paragraph 14 of the founding resolutions of the Peacebuilding Commission, we would like to draw your attention to the recommendation addressed to the international community for follow-up action to the joint communiqué.

The Peacebuilding Commission reiterates its determination to provide unflagging support to the consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone with a view to securing a future that is free from fear and free from want.

(*Signed*) Heraldo **Muñoz**
Chairperson
Peacebuilding Commission

(Signed) John **McNee**
Chairperson
Sierra Leone Configuration
Peacebuilding Commission

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Item 13 (m) of the provisional agenda*
Economic and environmental questions: transport of dangerous goods

Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 645 G (XXIII), the Secretary-General reports biennially to the Council on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, and of its two subcommittees.

The present report concerns the work of the Committee of Experts during the biennium 2007-2008 and the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/6.

In accordance with that resolution, the secretariat has published the fifteenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations*, amendments to the fourth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Manual of Tests and Criteria* and the second revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals*.

All the main legal instruments and codes governing the international transport of dangerous goods by sea, air, road, rail or inland waterway have been amended accordingly, with effect from 1 January 2009, and many Governments have also transposed the provisions of the Model Regulations into their own legislation for domestic traffic for application from 2009.

* E/2009/100.

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Many Governments and international organizations have revised or taken steps to revise existing national and international legislation in order to implement the Globally Harmonized System by the recommended target date of 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Committee adopted amendments to the Model Regulations and the *Manual of Tests and Criteria*, which consist mainly of new or revised provisions that concern listing, classification and packing of dangerous goods; transport in cryogenic receptacles; transport of fumigated freight containers; transport of radioactive material; transport of dangerous goods packed in limited quantities; metal hydride systems of storage of hydrogen; test requirements for explosives, pyrotechnic substances and lithium batteries; harmonization with the Globally Harmonized System; and the use of electronic data interchange for documentation purposes.

The Committee also adopted amendments to the Globally Harmonized System that concern mainly classification criteria for some physical hazards, hazards to the environment, hazards to health (chronic toxicity and respiratory and skin sensitizers) and hazards to the ozone layer. It completed the validation of the protocol on transformation/dissolution of metals and metal components in aqueous media. It issued a new set of combined hazard statements as well as guidance on the procedure of allocation of hazard statements and on the labelling of small packaging.

The Committee adopted a programme of work for the biennium 2009-2010; sessions for the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, for the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and for the Committee have been planned for the period 2009-2010 in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/65.

The Committee is recommending a draft resolution on its work for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

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I. Draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1999/65 of 26 October 1999 and 2007/6 of 23 July 2007,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals during the biennium 2007-2008,[1]

A. Work of the Committee regarding the transport of dangerous goods

Recognizing the importance of the work of the Committee for the harmonization of codes and regulations relating to the transport of dangerous goods,

Bearing in mind the need to maintain safety standards at all times and to facilitate trade, as well as the importance of this to the various organizations responsible for modal regulations, while meeting the growing concern for the protection of life, property and the environment through the safe and secure transport of dangerous goods,

Noting the ever-increasing volume of dangerous goods being introduced into worldwide commerce, and the rapid expansion of technology and innovation,

Recalling that, while the major international instruments governing the transport of dangerous goods by the various modes of transport and many national regulations are now better harmonized with the Model Regulations annexed to the Committee's recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods, further work on harmonizing these instruments is necessary to enhance safety and to facilitate trade, and recalling also that uneven progress in the updating of national inland transport legislation in some countries of the world continues to present serious challenges to international multimodal transport,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* for the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals with respect to matters relating to the transport of dangerous goods, including their security in transport;

[1] E/2009/55.

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To circulate the new and amended recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods[2] to the Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations concerned;

(b) To publish the sixteenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations*[3] and the fifth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Manual of Tests and Criteria*[4] in all the official languages of the United Nations, in the most cost-effective manner, no later than the end of 2009;

(c) To make those publications available on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe,[5] which provides secretariat services to the Committee, and to make them available also on CD-ROM;

3. *Invites* all Governments, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the other international organizations concerned to transmit to the secretariat of the Committee their views on the Committee's work, together with any comments that they may wish to make on the recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods;

4. *Invites* all interested Governments, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the international organizations concerned to take into account the recommendations of the Committee when developing or updating appropriate codes and regulations;

5. *Requests* the Committee to study, in consultation with the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the regional commissions and the intergovernmental organizations concerned, the possibilities of improving the implementation of the Model Regulations on the transport of dangerous goods in all countries for the purposes of ensuring a high level of safety and eliminating technical barriers to international trade, including through the further harmonization of international agreements or conventions governing the international transport of dangerous goods;

6. *Invites* all Governments, as well as the regional commissions and organizations concerned, the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization to provide feedback to the Committee regarding differences between the provisions of national, regional or international legal instruments and those of the Model Regulations, in order to enable the Committee to develop cooperative guidelines for enhancing consistency between these requirements and reducing unnecessary impediments; to identify existing substantive and modal international, regional and national differences, with the aim of reducing those differences to the greatest extent practical and ensuring that where differences are necessary they do not pose impediments to the safe and efficient transport of dangerous goods; and to undertake an editorial review of the Model Regulations and various modal instruments with the aim of improving clarity, user friendliness and ease of translation;

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[2] ST/SG/AC.10/36/Add.1 and Add.2.

[3] ST/SG/AC.10/1/Rev.16.

[4] ST/SG/AC.10/11/Rev.5.

[5] www.unece.org/trans/danger/danger.htm.

B. Work of the Committee regarding the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Bearing in mind that in paragraph 23 (c) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[6] countries were encouraged to implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008,

Bearing in mind also that the General Assembly, in its resolution 57/253 of 20 December 2002, endorsed the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and requested the Economic and Social Council to implement the provisions of the Plan relevant to its mandate and, in particular, to promote the implementation of Agenda 21 by strengthening system-wide coordination,

Noting with satisfaction:

(a) That the Economic Commission for Europe and all United Nations programmes and specialized agencies concerned with chemical safety in the field of transport or of the environment, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization, have already taken appropriate steps to amend their legal instruments in order to give effect to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals before the target date of the end of 2008 or are considering amending them as soon as possible;

(b) That the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization are also taking appropriate steps to adapt their existing chemical safety recommendations, codes and guidelines to the Globally Harmonized System, in particular in the areas of occupational health and safety, pesticide management and the prevention and treatment of poisoning;

(c) That the Globally Harmonized System has already been in force in New Zealand since 2001 and in Mauritius since 2004;[7]

(d) That a new regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council implementing the Globally Harmonized System in the member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area entered into force on 20 January 2009;[8]

(e) That other Member States participating in the activities of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and

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[6] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[7] Information on implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals by country and through international legal instruments, recommendations, codes and guidelines is available on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe at www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/implementation_e.html.

[8] Regulation (EC) No. 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 (Official Journal of the European Union, L 353 of 31 December 2008).

Labelling of Chemicals are actively preparing revisions of national legislation applicable to chemicals for implementation of the Globally Harmonized System;

(f) That a number of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies and regional organizations, in particular the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Governments, the European Commission and non-governmental organizations representing the chemical industry, have organized or contributed to multiple workshops, seminars and other capacity-building activities at the international, regional, subregional and national levels in order to raise administration, health sector and industry awareness and to prepare for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System;

Aware that effective implementation will require further cooperation between the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and the international bodies concerned, continued efforts by the Governments of Member States, cooperation with the industry and other stakeholders, and significant support for capacity-building activities in countries with economies in transition and developing countries,

Recalling the particular significance of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the International Labour Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Global Partnership for Capacity-building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals for building capacities at all levels,

1. *Commends* the Secretary-General for the publication of the second revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* in the six official languages of the United Nations, in book form[9] and on CD-ROM,[10] and its availability together with related information material on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe, which provides secretariat services to the Committee;[5]

2. *Expresses its deep appreciation* to the Committee, the Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and other organizations concerned for their fruitful cooperation and their commitment to the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To circulate the amendments[11] to the second revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* to the Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies and other international organizations concerned;

(b) To publish the third revised edition[12] of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* in all the official languages of the

[9] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.II.E.5 and corrigendum.
[10] Ibid., Sales No. E/F/S.07.VIII.4.
[11] ST/SG/AC.10/36/Add.3.
[12] ST/SG/AC.10/30/Rev.3.

United Nations in the most cost-effective manner no later than the end of 2009 and to make it available on CD-ROM and on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe;

(c) To continue to make information on the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System available on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe;

4. *Invites* Governments that have not yet done so to take the necessary steps, through appropriate national procedures and/or legislation, to implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as soon as possible;

5. *Reiterates its invitation* to the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to promote the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and, where relevant, to amend their respective legal international instruments addressing transport safety, workplace safety, consumer protection or the protection of the environment so as to give effect to the Globally Harmonized System through such instruments;

6. *Invites* Governments, the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to provide feedback to the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals on the steps taken for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System in all relevant sectors, through international, regional or national legal instruments, recommendations, codes and guidelines, including, when applicable, information about the transitional periods for its implementation;

7. *Encourages* Governments, the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, the specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, in particular those representing industry, to strengthen their support for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals by providing financial contributions and/or technical assistance for capacity-building activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

C. Programme of work of the Committee

Taking note of the programme of work of the Committee for the biennium 2009-2010 as contained in paragraphs 46 and 47 of the report of the Secretary-General,[1]

Noting the relatively poor level of participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the work of the Committee and the need to promote their wider participation in its work,

1. *Decides* to approve the programme of work of the Committee;

2. *Stresses* the importance of the participation of experts from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition in the work of the Committee, calls, in that regard, for voluntary contributions to facilitate their participation, including through support for travel and daily subsistence, and invites Member States and international organizations in a position to do so to contribute;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council in 2011 on the implementation of the present resolution, the recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

II. Implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/6

A. Publications

2. As requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2007/6, the Secretary-General prepared the fifteenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations*.[13] The edition was published for official circulation and sale in Arabic (175 copies), Chinese (120 copies), English (3,920 copies), French (365 copies), Russian (220 copies) and Spanish (360 copies).

3. Amendment 2 to the fourth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Manual of Tests and Criteria*[14] was published for official circulation and sale in Arabic (175 copies), Chinese (115 copies), English (2,385 copies), French (590 copies), Russian (215 copies) and Spanish (345 copies).

4. The second revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals*,[15] was published for official circulation and sale in Arabic (250 copies), Chinese (165 copies), English (2,725 copies), French (730 copies), Russian (245 copies) and Spanish (395 copies).

5. Combined versions of the *Model Regulations*, the *Manual of Tests and Criteria* and amendments 1 and 2 thereto and the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* were also published for sale on a CD-ROM containing the English, French and Spanish versions.[16]

6. The *Model Regulations*, the *Manual of Tests and Criteria* and amendments 1 and 2 thereto and the Globally Harmonized System are available online in all languages on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe.[5]

B. Implementation of the Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations

7. In its resolution 2007/6, the Economic and Social Council invited all interested Governments, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the international organizations concerned, when developing or updating appropriate codes and regulations, to take into account the recommendations of the Committee.

8. The provisions of the fifteenth revised edition of the Model Regulations[13] have been incorporated into the following international instruments:

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[13] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.VIII.1 and corrigendum.

[14] Ibid., Sales No. E.07.VIII.2.

[15] Ibid., Sales No. E.07.II.E.5 and corrigendum.

[16] Ibid., Sales No. E/F/S.07.VIII.4.

(a) International Maritime Organization (IMO): International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, amendment 34-08 (mandatory application for the 159 contracting parties to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea from 1 January 2010, with the possibility of application on a voluntary basis from 1 January 2009);

(b) International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): 2009-2010 edition of the Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (mandatory application for the 190 contracting parties to the Convention on International Civil Aviation from 1 January 2009);

(c) International Air Transport Association: Dangerous Goods Regulations 2009 (fiftieth) edition (applicable from 1 January 2009);

(d) Economic Commission for Europe: European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (applicable from 1 January 2009, 45 contracting parties);

(e) Economic Commission for Europe: European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (applicable from 28 February 2009, 11 contracting parties);

(f) Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail: Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (appendix C to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail) (applicable from 1 January 2009, 43 contracting parties).

9. In the member States of the European Union, the provisions of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, the Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail and the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways will also apply to domestic traffic from 1 July 2009.[17]

10. The Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) are applying an agreement on the inland transportation of dangerous goods (Acuerdo sobre Transporte de Mercancías Peligrosas en el MERCOSUR) based on the seventh revised edition[18] of the *Model Regulations*, the Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail and the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, which is being updated on the basis of the twelfth revised edition.[19]

11. The Andean Community (Bolivia Plurinational State of, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) have developed draft regulations based on the thirteenth revised edition of the *Model Regulations*,[20] the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (2005) and the Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (2005), which are still under consideration.

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[17] Directive 2008/68/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on the inland transport of dangerous goods (Official Journal of the European Union, L 260 of 30 September 2008).

[18] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.VIII.2.

[19] Ibid., Sales No. E.01.VIII.4.

[20] Ibid., Sales No. E.03.II.E.25 and corrigendum.

12. In 1997, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific published the *Guidelines for the Establishment of National and Regional Systems for Inland Transportation of Dangerous Goods*,[21] recommending the implementation of the recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods. The transport ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed, on 20 September 2002, Protocol No. 9 to the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit. The Protocol provides for the simplification of procedures and requirements for the transit transport of dangerous goods in ASEAN countries, using the Model Regulations and the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road.

13. In 1999, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon) adopted regulations concerning the transport of dangerous goods by road that are partly based on old provisions of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road but that are not fully in line with the Model Regulations.

14. With respect to domestic inland transport of dangerous goods in individual countries, except as described above implementation of the recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods may vary considerably depending on the national procedures for enacting law or updating regulations. For example, the regulations applicable in the United States of America (Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations) are normally updated on a yearly basis and they have been updated to reflect the fifteenth revised edition of the *Model Regulations*,[13] with very few exceptions. The Canadian regulations are based on the fourteenth revised edition[22] but consignes are authorized to use the classification and shipping names of the latest edition. The *Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail* (seventh edition) is also based on the fourteenth revised edition of the *Model Regulations*. The twelfth revised edition[19] of the *Model Regulations* has been adopted as a national standard in Malaysia and has been implemented through national legislation in Brazil and Thailand.

15. Although international transport of dangerous goods is facilitated by the harmonization of the major international conventions and agreements concerning the transport of dangerous goods with the Model Regulations, and their simultaneous updating, the fact that certain national regulations applicable to inland transport are not brought into line simultaneously, or completely, is still causing problems in international trade, in particular in the case of multimodal transport. For that reason, the Committee has maintained in its draft programme of work an item on global harmonization of regulations on the transport of dangerous goods with the Model Regulations.

C. Implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

16. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg, in paragraph 23 (c) of its Plan of Implementation,[6] encouraged countries to implement

[21] Ibid., Sales No. E.98.II.F.49.

[22] Ibid., Sales No. E.05.VIII.1 and corrigendum.

the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008.

17. Since the Globally Harmonized System addresses several sectors (transport, consumers, occupational health and safety and the environment), its effective implementation requires significant efforts from Member States to amend many existing legal texts concerning chemical safety in each sector or to enact new legislation.

18. In the transport sector, the Model Regulations have already been updated to reflect the relevant provisions of the second revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System*. All the major international instruments listed in paragraph 8 above have also been amended accordingly for effective application in 2009, as have all national regulations that are based on those instruments or that are regularly updated on the basis of the Model Regulations.

19. In the other sectors, the situation is more complex, because implementation requires the amendment or revision of a considerable number of different legal texts and guidelines for application.

20. Legal instruments implementing the Globally Harmonized System have already entered into force in the following countries: New Zealand (2001), Mauritius (2004), Republic of Korea (2006) and all countries members of the European Union and the European Economic Area (January 2009).

21. Other countries, in particular all those which participate (either as full members or as observers) in the meetings of the Subcommittee of Experts of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (see also paragraphs 28-30 below) as well as Chile, Malaysia and Singapore, continue to revise and amend their legal texts, standards and guidelines to achieve implementation of the Globally Harmonized System as soon as possible.

22. In order to monitor the status of implementation of the Globally Harmonized System, the secretariat has placed on its website[5] all the information it has collected from countries. The website provides the possibility for Government administrations to update this information or to submit new information for the various sectors concerned. **All countries are therefore invited to provide such information, as indicated in paragraph 6 of part B of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 1 above.**

23. Direct technical advice and expertise have been provided to several other Member States by some members and by the secretariat.

24. A workshop on the Globally Harmonized System aimed at different sectors (transport, industry, customs and administration) was organized by the Ministry of Health of Chile (Santiago, April 2007).

25. With the financial support of several Member States, the European Commission and the private sector, several additional capacity-building and training activities were carried out, with the participation of experts from the Subcommittee, by various organizations and programmes, in particular:

(a) United Nations Institute for Training and Research/International Labour Organization (UNITAR/ILO) Global Capacity-building Programme on the Globally Harmonized System and the World Summit on Sustainable Development Global

Partnership for Capacity-building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System for Chemical Classification and Labelling:

(i) National Globally Harmonized System workshops and planning meetings in Cambodia, China the Gambia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal, Thailand and Viet Nam;

(ii) Regional workshops on chemical hazard communication and Globally Harmonized System implementation for ASEAN countries (Indonesia, May 2007), for public interest and labour organizations (Indonesia, May 2007) and for countries of the Economic Community of West African States (Nigeria, May 2008);

(iii) Second meeting of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Global Partnership for Capacity-building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System (Geneva, July 2007);

(iv) Globally Harmonized System presentations at the third Arab Conference on Occupational Safety and Health (Bahrain, November 2008); the third Latin American Conference on Chemical Accidents and the second Meeting of Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Centres (Argentina, November 2008); the sixth United Nations University/Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology Joint Programme Workshop on Sound Management of Hazardous Chemicals and Sustainable Energy (Republic of Korea, October 2008); Regional Workshop for the preparation of the second meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group to review and assess measures to address the global issue of mercury (Qatar, June 2008);

(v) Development of resource materials: revised guidance document on preparing a national implementation strategy; training courses on the Globally Harmonized System; revised guidance on comprehensibility testing; country case studies on the legal implementation of the Globally Harmonized System; international Globally Harmonized System handbook; industry awareness-raising brochure; World Summit on Sustainable Development Global Partnership for Capacity-building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System annual reports;

(vi) Twelfth and thirteenth meetings of the Capacity-building Programme advisory group, which were held back-to-back with those of the Subcommittee;

(b) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation: sixth meeting of the Chemical Dialogue (Australia, June 2007) and follow-up meetings of various working groups where Globally Harmonized System implementation issues are under consideration;

(c) World Health Organization/ILO/United Nations Environment Programme (WHO/ILO/UNEP) International Programme on Chemical Safety:

(i) Review and update of the International Chemical Safety Cards to include Globally Harmonized System classification and labelling. To date, Globally Harmonized System classification has been included in 178 new or revised Cards;

(ii) Workshop on the Globally Harmonized System for the health sector in Nigeria (May 2008);

(d) UNEP Regional Office for West Asia:

(i) Regional training workshop on the Globally Harmonized System (Saudi Arabia, April 2008);

(ii) Globally Harmonized System promotion at the following meetings:

a. Second joint meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council groups on ozone, chemicals and customs (Saudi Arabia, May 2008);

b. Meeting of the Arab technical group on hazardous waste and chemical multilateral environmental agreements (Egypt, November 2008);

c. Arab symposium for sound management of chemicals (Syrian Arab Republic, November 2008);

(e) Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals: preparation of a guidance document to assist countries with the transition phase for Globally Harmonized System implementation.

26. The Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System has also continued its cooperation with treaty bodies that administer certain international conventions dealing with specific aspects of chemical safety in order to facilitate the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System through such conventions (Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; and Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (see also para. 44 below)).

III. Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals during the biennium 2007-2008

A. Meetings held

27. The following meetings were held during the biennium 2007-2008:

(a) Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: thirty-first session, 2 to 6 July 2007 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/62 and Add.1); thirty-second session, 3 to 7 December 2007 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/64); thirty-third session, 30 June to 9 July 2008 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/66 and Add.1); and thirty-fourth session, 1 to 9 December 2008 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/68);

(b) Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals: thirteenth session, 9 and 10 July 2007 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/26 and Corr.1); fourteenth session, 12 to 14 December 2007 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/28); fifteenth session, 9 to 11 July 2008 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/30); and sixteenth session, 10 to 12 December 2008 (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/32);

(c) Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals: fourth session, 12 December 2008 (ST/SG/AC.10/36 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3).

28. The following 29 countries participated in the work of the Committee as full members of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals or of both Subcommittees: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, the Czech Republic,[23] Denmark,[24] Finland, France, Germany, Ireland,[24] Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand,[24] Norway, Poland,[23] Portugal,[23] Qatar,[24] the Russian Federation,[23] Senegal,[24] Serbia,[24] South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

29. India, Mexico and Morocco, full members of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Greece, Ukraine and Zambia, full members of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, a full member of both Subcommittees, did not participate.

30. The Governments of Bulgaria,[23] Cambodia,[24] Ireland,[23] Jamaica,[24] Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic,[24] New Zealand,[23] Nigeria,[24] the Republic of Korea, Qatar,[23] Romania, the Russian Federation,[24] Slovakia,[23] Slovenia,[24] Switzerland, Thailand,[24] Tunisia,[23] Uruguay,[24] and Viet Nam[24] were represented by observers. The Commission of the European Communities, nine specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations and 50 non-governmental organizations also participated.

31. Liaison was maintained with the international bodies or organizations responsible for individual modes of transport, in particular the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (for inland transport in those regions), ICAO, IMO and the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail.

32. The Committee paid special attention to the coordination of its own activities with those of other international organizations whose activities impinge on the field of transport of dangerous goods or of classification of chemicals, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ILO, WHO, UNEP, the Universal Postal Union, UNITAR and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, to ensure that their work would complement, rather than duplicate or clash with, its own activities and recommendations.

33. Secretariat services were provided by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe.

[23] Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods only.

[24] Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals only.

B. Work of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

34. During the biennium 2007-2008, the Subcommittee discussed various questions related to its terms of reference in accordance with the programme of work laid out in document E/2007/53, para. 43 (a).

35. On the basis of that work, the Committee adopted amendments[25] to the fifteenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations* and to the fourth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Manual of Tests and Criteria* consisting mainly of new or revised provisions concerning:

(a) The listing and classification of some existing and new dangerous substances and articles and related packing methods and the revision of some packing and tank requirements;

(b) The transport of dangerous goods in cryogenic receptacles;

(c) The transport of fumigated freight containers;

(d) The harmonization of the Model Regulations with the IAEA regulations for the safe transport of radioactive material;

(e) The transport of dangerous goods packed in limited quantities;

(f) New requirements for intermediate bulk packagings, large packagings and metal hydride storage systems for hydrogen;

(g) Test requirements for some explosives, pyrotechnic substances and lithium batteries;

(h) The harmonization of the Model Regulations with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, in particular for classification of environmentally hazardous substances;

(i) The use of electronic data interchange for documentation purposes.

36. The Subcommittee updated guiding principles intended to explain the rationale behind the provisions contained in the Model Regulations and to guide regulators when assigning transport requirements to specific dangerous goods. It considered that this work should be continued in the biennium 2009-2010.

37. The Subcommittee considered the issue of possible further measures to facilitate global harmonization of regulations on the transport of dangerous goods with the Model Regulations (see also para. 15 above). It agreed that additional efforts should be made to improve harmonization at the worldwide level. **In order to assess the problem more precisely, Governments and international organizations concerned are invited to provide feedback by drawing attention to requirements in their national, regional, or international instruments that deviate from the Model Regulations.**

38. Acting as the focal point for physical hazards as regards the development and updating of the Globally Harmonized System, the Subcommittee prepared proposals for new criteria, which were endorsed by the Subcommittee of Experts on the

[25] ST/SG/AC.10/36/Add.1 and 2.

Globally Harmonized System and the Committee (see subpara. 41 (a) below). Work initiated as regards chemically unstable gases, substances which when in contact with water emit toxic gases, and desensitized explosives should be pursued in the biennium 2009-2010 (see also para. 42 below).

39. **The action recommended by the Committee to be taken by the Economic and Social Council with respect to the work of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods is reflected in part A, paragraphs 1 to 6, of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 1 of the present report.**

C. Work of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

40. During the biennium 2007-2008, the Subcommittee discussed various questions related to its terms of reference in accordance with its programme of work laid out in document E/2007/53, paragraph 43 (b).

41. On the basis of that work, the Committee adopted amendments[26] to the second revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* intended to update, clarify or to complement the System concerning, in particular, the following:

(a) Classification criteria for some physical hazards, for example aerosols, explosives, ammonium nitrate emulsions, suspensions or gels, oxidizing gases, flammable liquids and self-heating substances;

(b) Introduction of two new subcategories for respiratory and skin sensitizers;

(c) Classification criteria for mixtures;

(d) New criteria for the classification and provisions for labelling of substances and mixtures hazardous to the ozone layer;

(e) Review of the criteria for chronic toxicity of the aquatic environment;

(f) Completion of the validation of the protocol on transformation/dissolution of metals and metal compounds in aqueous media;

(g) New guidance on the precedence of allocation of hazard statements and a new set of combined hazard statements (and related codes thereto);

(h) New guidance on the labelling of very small packagings.

42. The Subcommittee considered that the work in the following areas should be continued in the biennium 2009-2010: development of classification and labelling criteria for chemically unstable gases and gas mixtures (including the determination of their chemical instability); review of test series 7; classification of desensitized explosives; assessment of water activated toxicity; implementation issues; improvement of annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the Globally Harmonized System; and development of further guidance for the labelling of very small packagings.

[26] ST/SG/AC.10/36/Add.3.

43. The Subcommittee kept under review progress made in the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System on the basis of reports submitted by its members and participating intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.[27]

44. The Subcommittee continued to cooperate with treaty bodies established under international conventions concerning chemical safety to promote the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System through such conventions (see also para. 26 above).

45. **The action recommended by the Committee to be taken by the Economic and Social Council with respect to the work of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals is reflected in part B, paragraphs 1 to 7, of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 1 of the present report.**

IV. Programme of work and schedule of meetings for the biennium 2009-2010

46. The Committee agreed that the programme of work for the biennium 2009-2010 should be as follows:

(a) Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods:

(i) Explosives and related matters (including desensitized explosives and test series 7);

(ii) Listing, classification and packing (including classification of mixtures and solutions);

(iii) Electric 'storage systems (including lithium batteries and ultracapacitors);

(iv) Miscellaneous proposals of amendments to the Model Regulations (including transport of coolant/conditioning units);

(v) Electronic data interchange;

(vi) Cooperation with IAEA;

(vii) Global harmonization of transport of dangerous goods regulations with the Model Regulations;

(viii) Guiding principles for the Model Regulations (updating);

(ix) Issues relating to the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System (including corrosivity criteria; criteria for substances which, in contact with water, emit toxic gases; and unstable gases);

(b) Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals:

(i) Chemically unstable gases and gas mixtures;

[27] Information on implementation of the Globally Harmonized System by country and through international legal instruments, recommendations, codes and guidelines is available on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe at: http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/implementation_e.html.

(ii) Explosives and related matters;

(iii) Corrosion of metals;

(iv) Water activated toxicity;

(v) Editorial revision of chapters 3.2 and 3.3;

(vi) Issues related to the application of Globally Harmonized System criteria to the classification of substances and mixtures;

(vii) Implementation issues;

(viii) Improvement of annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the Globally Harmonized System;

(ix) Labelling of small packagings (including work on packagings terminology and definitions);

(x) Continue the activities to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the Globally Harmonized System in countries;

(xi) Continue cooperation with the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on matters of common concern;

(xii) Strengthen and increase cooperation with United Nations programmes and specialized agencies and regional, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations responsible for the administration of international agreements and conventions dealing with the management of chemicals, so as to give effect to the Globally Harmonized System through such instruments;

(xiii) Review reports on training and capacity-building activities;

(xiv) Provide assistance to United Nations programmes and specialized agencies involved in training and capacity-building activities, such as UNITAR, ILO, FAO and WHO/International Programme on Chemical Safety, through the development of guidance materials, advice with respect to their training programmes and identification of available expertise and resources.

47. Bearing in mind that, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/65, the maximum number of meeting days allocated to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies is 38 (76 meetings), the Committee agreed that the schedule of meetings for the period 2009-2010 should be as follows:

2009

22-26 June 2009: Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, thirty-fifth session (10 meetings)

29 June-1 July (morning) 2009: Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, seventeenth session (5 meetings)

30 November-9 December (morning) 2009: Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, thirty-sixth session (15 meetings)

9 (afternoon)-11 December 2009: Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, eighteenth session (5 meetings)

Total: Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: 25 meetings; Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals: 10 meetings

2010

21-30 (morning) June 2010: Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, thirty-seventh session (15 meetings)

30 (afternoon) June-2 July 2010: Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, nineteenth session (5 meetings)

29 November-7 (morning) December 2010: Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, thirty-eighth session (13 meetings)

7 (afternoon)-9 December 2010: Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, twentieth session (5 meetings)

10 December 2010: Committee, fifth session (2 meetings)

Total: Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: 28 meetings; Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals: 10 meetings; Committee: 2 meetings

48. **Action recommended by the Committee to be taken by the Economic and Social Council with respect to its programme of work is reflected in part C, paragraphs 1 to 3, of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 1 of the present report.**

United Nations E/2009/56

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council

Theme of the coordination segment: the role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The 2009 coordination segment will focus on the role of the United Nations system in promoting the implementation of the 2008 ministerial declaration entitled "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development".

The present report provides an overview of United Nations system efforts to further the sustainable development agenda against the backdrop of current challenges. In particular, it assesses progress and challenges in priority areas identified in the 2008 ministerial declaration; identifies lessons learned from country-level experience to strengthen support for national sustainable development strategies; and assesses the impact of current challenges on those efforts.

The report makes a number of recommendations in the areas of energy, climate change, water, agricultural and rural development, sustainable urbanization, social equality and institutions for sustainable development.

* E/2009/100.

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I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council has decided that, at its coordination segment, the Council should review the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted at the high-level segment of its substantive session in the previous year.[1] Accordingly, at the 2009 coordination segment, the Council will review the implementation of the 2008 ministerial declaration entitled "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", and the present report will facilitate such consideration.

2. The 2008 ministerial declaration reiterated the need for an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in line with Agenda 21, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation") and the goals and objectives of the United Nations development agenda. It reaffirmed that effective development strategies for poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development should focus on tackling climate change; promoting affordable, cost-effective and efficient energy supply; ensuring integrated water resource management; promoting sustainable urbanization; investing in rural and agricultural development; enhancing social equality, including the empowerment of women; and strengthening institutions for sustainable development.

3. The declaration also recognized that efforts to achieve sustainable development face multiple challenges, including food insecurity, financial and economic crises and the impact of environmental degradation and climate change. Achieving sustainable development in these challenging times will require comprehensive approaches and concerted action.

4. Despite the considerable progress made in recent decades to reduce overall poverty and increase global economic growth, many countries continue to experience extreme poverty, growing economic and social inequalities, rapid depletion of their natural resources and a decreasing ability to provide basic nutrition for their population. Those trends have demonstrated that current paths to development are neither adequate nor sustainable.

5. The United Nations conferences of the past decade have produced a comprehensive normative and policy framework for the achievement of sustainable development. The 2008 ministerial declaration reaffirmed that consensus and recognized that efforts to achieve the objective face multiple challenges.

6. While national Governments have the primary responsibility for formulating and implementing their own sustainable development strategies, the international community, including the United Nations system, has a critical role to play in supporting those efforts through global programmes, measures and policies aimed at promoting sustainable development globally and supporting developing countries in their sustainable development efforts. The 2008 ministerial declaration stressed, in particular, the role of the international community in helping developing countries to (a) mobilize adequate and sustained levels of resources; (b) facilitate and finance access to and the transfer of key technologies; and (c) build capacity at all levels.

[1] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/29, para. 10.

7. The present report examines the role of the United Nations system in supporting national efforts to achieve sustainable development. The report will (a) provide an overview of the efforts of the United Nations system to embrace the sustainable development framework; (b) assess its work in the priority areas identified in the 2008 ministerial declaration; (c) identify lessons learned from country-level experiences regarding the system's support for national sustainable development strategies; and (d) assess the impact of emerging challenges on those efforts to promote sustainable development.

II. Overview of the work of the United Nations system

A. Trends in sustainable development

8. The term "sustainable development" was popularized by the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission and provided the key conceptual framework for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The expression embodied a holistic approach to policymaking. It was that approach which gave global prominence to such concepts as the precautionary principle, burden-sharing, intergenerational equity, common and differentiated responsibilities, incremental costs, benefit-sharing, sustainable use, public-private partnership and information-sharing as a policy tool, to name but a few. The "sustainable development" decision-making process led to more intensive interaction among Governments, civil society and the private sector, as well as the emergence of several new tools for policy analysis, including, inter alia, integrated assessment, multicriteria analysis, scenarios, life-cycle approaches, value chains, hot spots, footprints analysis, sustainable livelihoods and participatory analysis.

9. During the following decade, only halting progress was made on the sustainable development agenda, which is why the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, focused on what could be done to accelerate the implementation of commitments made in Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. With regard to the global challenges identified in the Rio Conventions, in particular with respect to climate change, little progress had been made by 2002 in the process of reviewing disturbing global trends. The Kyoto Protocol had been adopted in 1997, but without the participation of the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide.

10. Given the global financial and economic crisis, the current period is one of intense re-examination of conventional wisdom on the workings of markets, especially financial markets, the role of government in regulating those markets and requirements not just for economic recovery, but for long-term sustainable development. It provides a backdrop for fresh thinking on reconciling the goals of growth, equity and environmental sustainability. The concept of a "global green new deal" for sustainable development is one that links the short-term imperative of protecting the vulnerable from the worst impacts of the current crises, putting people back to work and restoring economic growth, with the longer-term imperative of moving economies onto low-carbon growth paths and towards the broader realization of the Millennium Development Goals and socio-economic development for all. The question remains whether the current moment of multiple crises will serve to galvanize the political will of the world's leaders to act together.

The climate change negotiations, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009, will provide a litmus test.

11. While sustainable development is a widely recognized framework to balance economic, social and environmental objectives in the formulation of national development strategies, the framework has yet to be translated into comprehensive, integrated approaches leading to sustainable development.

12. Among the reasons for that are political time horizons, which often favour short-term over long-term policy objectives; the inherent complexity of policymaking processes which must account for and balance multiple objectives, economic, social and environmental; limited understanding of the interlinkages and interactions among different policy areas relevant to sustainable development; organizational inertia in government and other systems which have been built or evolved on the basis of specialization rather than integration; and a shortage of human, financial and technical resources for implementing a sustainable development approach. The 2008 ministerial declaration has identified a number of priority areas that deserve greater attention (see section III below).

B. Efforts of the United Nations system to embrace the sustainable development framework

13. Sustainable development represents a comprehensive, coherent and integrated approach to the work of the United Nations. For this reason, it is closely related to the "one United Nations" concept advocated by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in its report — prepared by the High-level Committee on Programmes — to the 2005 World Summit and in the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, which states: "The essence of our vision is for the United Nations to deliver as one in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment" (see A/61/583).

14. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the United Nations system has made consistent efforts to embrace the sustainable development framework in its work. In particular, the United Nations system has played a critical role in expanding the notion of economic performance to include the social and environmental dimensions of development in economic planning decisions. The consensus around the Millennium Development Goals and their respective targets for accelerated progress in human development has further advanced those efforts by establishing an overarching framework for United Nations activities, one that addresses the strong interlinkages between poverty, environment, health, nutrition and other areas.

15. United Nations system organizations have increasingly embraced more comprehensive strategies and mechanisms to implement their mandates and promote the integration of social and environmental concerns into national development plans. The past several years have witnessed a sea change in this regard. In the spirit of "one United Nations", system organizations, within their respective mandates, have made important strides in increasing coordination and cooperation in their activities related to different aspects of sustainable development, as demonstrated by the numerous joint activities and programmes undertaken.

16. More needs to be done, however, to (a) mainstream the notion of sustainable development into all areas of work of the United Nations system; (b) align and coordinate, within a sustainable development framework, the multiplicity of United Nations system activities at the policy, programme and operational levels across the areas identified in the 2008 ministerial declaration; and (c) ensure that existing mechanisms and strategic frameworks for system-wide support to national development planning fully integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

III. Assessment of United Nations system efforts to implement the 2008 ministerial declaration

A. Affordable, cost-effective and efficient energy supply

17. Global demand for energy services is expected to increase from 1990 levels by as much as an order of magnitude by 2050, while primary-energy demands are expected to increase by between 1.5 and 3 times, raising concerns about environmental impacts, for example, air pollution, acid precipitation, forest destruction and climate change, and the sustainability and affordability of energy supplies. Those concerns have generated a growing consensus on the need to increase energy efficiency and invest in renewable energy sources and low-carbon technologies as cost-effective and environmentally responsible alternatives to conventional energy generation.

18. Although technical and market potential exists to significantly increase the contribution of alternative sources for meeting countries' energy demands, a variety of barriers or conditions may limit their deployment. Those barriers continue to limit prospects for widespread deployment of such technologies in developing countries without financial support from developed countries.

19. The United Nations has an important role to play in helping to remove economic, regulatory and institutional barriers to the deployment of renewable energy sources. In particular, it plays an important role in promoting national energy policies that integrate environmental, economic and social concerns and international policies that enable easier access to advanced technologies and external resources.

20. As no single entity in the United Nations system has primary responsibility for energy, in 2004, as a result of an initiative of the High-level Committee on Programmes, an ad hoc task force of United Nations energy experts established UN-Energy as an inter-agency mechanism to coordinate and facilitate the follow-up by the United Nations system of the energy-related decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The mechanism's objective is to promote system-wide collaboration in the area of energy and develop a coherent and consistent approach to energy challenges affecting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This integrated approach takes into account the fact that energy is a prerequisite for sustainable development, providing essential input into the full range of economic and social activities.

21. UN-Energy promotes coordination among major ongoing energy initiatives carried out by various system agencies and encourages joint efforts at the global,

regional, subregional, national and local levels. UN-Energy focuses on energy access, renewable energy, energy efficiency and instruments for policy integration, capacity-building and awareness-raising at the country-level. It also interacts with non-United Nations stakeholders to ensure their effective engagement in implementing the energy-related decisions taken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

22. While the initiative has made clear progress in enhancing United Nations system cooperation to follow up the energy agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it has not been able to establish a more ambitious system-wide approach on energy. There are, nevertheless, indications that, by working together, the entities of the system could achieve significant results in this regard, particularly in the areas of access, renewable energy, efficiency and energy security. The success of UN-Energy will depend on whether it will be able to provide a broad strategic direction to guide the policy and operational work of United Nations agencies on energy.

Recommendations

The United Nations system should:

- Actively promote a global energy access initiative which would seek to eliminate energy poverty in the world within the next decade and a half.
- Strengthen its overall capacity to assess international and domestic barriers to clean technology development and transfer and suggest policy options to overcome them.

UN-Energy should:

- Promote system-wide policy coherence, including through joint initiatives and programmes, in relation to energy access, efficiency, security and renewable energy technologies, in ways that promote industrial activities, job creation, transportation, commerce, micro-enterprise and agricultural development.

B. Climate change

23. The United Nations system is increasingly taking the approach that climate change is a sustainable development issue that requires the involvement of a wide range of sectors, including finance, energy, transport, agriculture and health. Actions supported by the United Nations system address both adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change and greenhouse gas mitigation.

24. Climate change is projected to have increasingly negative effects on food production, infrastructure and the livelihoods of many people. Reducing vulnerability and increasing the capacity of economic and social systems to adapt to climate change has become an urgent policy priority. The risks associated with climate change call for a broad spectrum of policy responses at the local, regional and global levels. A consensus has emerged on the need to integrate adaptation issues into core development strategies and practices and develop an integrated approach to climate change. A key current United Nations contribution to adaptation is the development of integrated national development plans and strategies, including climate screening of national strategies, country-level vulnerability and

adaptation assessments and capacity-building at the country level. For instance, a partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme focuses on mainstreaming climate change concerns into national development strategies by means of a three-pronged approach: (a) assisting countries in assessing their vulnerabilities and incorporating adaptation concerns into national policies and investment plans; (b) assisting United Nations country teams in integrating climate risk into the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework; and (c) conducting pilot projects in key affected sectors, together with relevant United Nations agencies. The United Nations system has also supported the preparation by least developed countries of national adaptation programmes of action, which are intended to identify urgent and immediate adaptation needs, to be supported by multilateral climate change funds and other sources.

25. Mitigating climate change requires a multifaceted approach, spanning all areas of policy and decision-making. Comprehensive national development strategies are a key tool for mitigating climate change. Energy is critical to climate mitigation, and the United Nations system is active in promoting renewable energy. Another example of system action relates to the provision of technical support on afforestation and reforestation programmes and support for the development of equitable mechanisms to realize the co-benefits of reducing emissions from deforestation, conserving biodiversity and ensuring environmental sustainability.

26. The United Nations system helps countries to develop supportive legal and regulatory frameworks integrating climate change concerns into Government policies regulating various sectors of the economy; facilitating the adoption of cost-effective, environmentally sound technologies; mobilizing adequate and predictable resources; and building human capacity to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

27. The Secretary-General has undertaken a number of initiatives to instil a sense of urgency in the international community with regard to the issue of climate change, in particular with a view to the successful outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. In September 2007, the Secretary-General hosted, in New York, a high-level event on climate change to advance the global climate change agenda and build momentum for a post-2012 international climate change framework. At present, the Secretary-General is deeply engaged in efforts to contribute towards the successful outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. In this connection, the Secretary-General will host an all-day high-level event in New York on 22 September for Heads of State or Government.

28. The Secretary-General has also worked towards mainstreaming climate change in the work of the United Nations system. In 2007, as Chairman of the CEB, the Secretary-General spearheaded a CEB process to reinforce the United Nations system coordination framework for climate change with the objective of (a) strengthening the system's contribution to the intergovernmental negotiations within the Framework Convention process; and (b) developing a comprehensive United Nations system approach to climate change that addresses the interconnected issues of economic growth, climate change, food and agriculture, and energy. In this regard, the High-level Committee on Programmes of the CEB established a working

group on climate change to develop an action-oriented approach that brought to bear the expertise of the entire United Nations system with a view to addressing the global and multifaceted challenges of climate change, including adaptation, mitigation, financing and technology development and transfer.

29. That initiative builds on existing coordination mechanisms, such as UN-Energy, UN-Water and UN-Oceans, to demonstrate in practice how climate change and sustainable development are interlinked. Going forward, a major challenge for CEB will be to ensure a broad strategic direction for the United Nations system's work on climate change that will guide the activities of all United Nations agencies. This will help to mainstream climate change issues in United Nations system sectoral activities and promote climate change concerns more broadly in the system's support for national development and poverty eradication strategies.

30. Working in collaboration with the High-level Committee on Programmes, the United Nations Development Group, now a pillar of CEB, is expected to focus on strengthening country-level implementation of a United Nations system strategy on climate change. In this regard, a Development Group Task Team on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability has been established to mainstream environmental issues, including environmental degradation, climate change and sustainable development, into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and United Nations country team activities.

Recommendations

- United Nations system organizations should strengthen existing collaborative mechanisms and capacity to address the socio-economic and environmental impacts of climate change in order to assist countries in integrating climate change and environmental issues into their core policy and decision-making processes.
- The United Nations system strategy on climate change should guide the activities of all United Nations entities in support of key sectors — e.g., clean energy, rural energy, water resources management, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem infrastructure, coastal zone management and sustainable cities — and promote joint assessments/programmes.

C. Integrated water resource management

31. By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, while two thirds of the world's population could face water-stressed conditions with respect to access to drinking water and water for food, energy and industrial production. These trends indicate that problems in the water sector will become increasingly more complex and intertwined with those in other development sectors, such as agriculture, energy, industry, transportation and communication, as well as in social sectors, including education, environment, health, and rural and regional development. Water professionals and water ministries alone will no longer be sufficient to resolve a country's water problems. A more holistic and strategic approach will be needed to deal with issues related to water scarcity.

32. The World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed integrated water resource management as a fundamental principle to ensure sustainable development, and called for improved frameworks in that regard. In paragraph 26 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, all countries are called on to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005.[2] Despite a growing international recognition of the need for a more holistic approach to water resources management, sectoral approaches continue to prevail, resulting in uncoordinated water development and management. In many countries, there are still a number of barriers to the implementation of a more integrated approach, including inadequate water policies, strategies and institutional and legislative frameworks that reflect the principles of sustainable water management; lack of necessary knowledge on the part of stakeholders, including Governments, to fully apply integrated water resource management in a way that balances social, ecological and economic considerations so as to ensure equitable allocation and sustainable usage; and lack of reliable and sustained financing to ensure the successful implementation of integrated water resource management processes. As a result, disputes over limited and vulnerable water resources continue among rural, industrial and urban users.

33. The United Nations system plays an important role in helping countries to overcome such barriers and achieve the more integrated and effective management of water resources. Specific support provided by United Nations agencies involves the promotion of water governance, assistance in the development of policies, laws and regulations for integrated water resource management, capacity-building in regional, national and local institutions and the facilitation of information exchange.

34. In 2003, the High-level Committee on Programmes launched UN-Water, an inter-agency mechanism aimed at adding value to existing United Nations initiatives supporting water resources management and at mobilizing the system's resources in an efficient and integrated manner so as to tackle global water and sanitation challenges, including water-caused disasters, emergencies and other extreme events, and help countries to meet their developmental and environmental targets. The key objectives of UN-Water are to promote the effective exchange of information system-wide; facilitate mutual support between United Nations global and regional activities; and encourage inter-agency networking arrangements among United Nations agencies and outside partners concerning the follow-up to the decisions related to water taken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In response to the call of the World Summit to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, UN-Water conducted a survey of 104 countries to assess progress in the planning and implementation of integrated water resource management plans and proposed a road map for advancing such processes. The *World Water Development Report* is a successful example of the joint effort of the entities that make up UN-Water.

35. The efforts of UN-Water to coordinate United Nations system activities promoting integrated water resources management is having a positive spin-off effect on the coordination of local government agencies, as well as on donor coordination in the area of funding and investment within countries. However, there

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

is scope for UN-Water to evolve further from its current coordination role to play a more prominent role in addressing emerging issues such as climate change and in providing a platform for developing inter-agency responses to tackle them. There would also be benefits to closer collaboration with UN-Energy and UN-Oceans in areas where there are synergies.

Recommendations

- The United Nations system should promote greater understanding of the impact of global development challenges such as climate change on the demand and supply of water and identify ways to prevent future shocks, increase resilience and adaptive capacity and mitigate environmental impacts.
- The United Nations system organizations should strengthen efforts to build national water management capacity, e.g., in the areas of promoting education and awareness-raising; information resources for policymaking; regulations and compliance; dispute-resolution; basic infrastructure; and market stability.
- The UN-Water initiative should promote the participation of all water stakeholders in the design and implementation of strategic elements of evolving integrated water resource management processes and the provision of effective responses to emergency issues affecting water management.
- The work of UN-Water at the regional and local levels should be integrated into United Nations country-level efforts to support national sustainable development strategies.

D. Sustainable agriculture and rural development

36. In the aftermath of the food crisis, there was widespread agreement that agricultural productivity, rural livelihoods, the sustainable management of natural resources and food security were inextricably linked to development and climate change challenges and thus needed to be addressed comprehensively in order to avert another food crisis. In particular, sustainable agriculture and rural development practices were deemed crucial to reducing hunger and poverty while sustaining the ecosystems that poor rural people rely on for their livelihoods. Poverty, limited access to land and other resources, poor infrastructure and political and social constraints restrict the ability of rural people, especially the most disadvantaged, to adopt sustainable practices to secure or improve their own livelihoods.

37. The United Nations plays a critical role in increasing access and capacity of poor rural people to implement sustainable agricultural and rural practices. In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the concept of sustainable agriculture and rural development was launched as a contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21 (chapter 14). The initiative recognized sustainable agriculture as fundamental for poverty reduction and environmental protection and outlined programmes and actions to enhance food security in a sustainable way.

38. Since then, thanks to several initiatives and alliances that promoted the multi-disciplinary nature of sustainable agriculture and rural development — for example, the United Nations System Network on Rural Development and Food Security, the International Alliance Against Hunger (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD),

World Food Programme (WFP) and other partners) and the Memorandum of Understanding between the International Labour Organization and FAO to promote rural employment — the concept has evolved to include social, institutional and economic sustainability. Current definitions of sustainable agriculture and rural development are generally concerned with the need for agricultural practices to be economically viable, to meet human needs for food, to be environmentally positive and to be concerned with quality of life.

39. The United Nations system follows a twin-track approach to addressing short- and long-term challenges to sustainable agriculture and rural development. This approach was reflected most recently in the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, established in April 2008. The short-term approach addresses hunger and malnutrition through immediate and direct action to alleviate their impact. It also provides the basis for sustainable livelihoods, as well as resilience to climate events, for the most vulnerable communities. Interventions focus on putting in place and scaling up emergency feeding programmes and other social protection schemes targeted at vulnerable populations, including school feeding programmes, vouchers, cash transfers and food-based employment programmes. Measures to ensure that small farmers are able to afford and access farm inputs in a timely manner so as to meet planting schedules have also been important in the context of the short-term response.

40. The long-term approach focuses on increasing investment in agriculture, which has been neglected for many years by both Governments and donors; developing agricultural value chains, including improved storage and distribution; building up farmers' marketing cooperatives and other organizations to enhance farmers' market power; enhancing farmers' access to credit; and strengthening agricultural extension services with a focus on training farmers in sustainable agricultural practices, including in the area of land and water management. Also important are the provision of support to small- and medium-sized agro-industry enterprises in rural areas to generate employment and diversify rural economies and the building of rural infrastructure, such as irrigation, water storage, roads and electricity grids.

41. Such initiatives by multiple United Nations agencies, in particular the Rome-based agencies, require strong coordination, and one of the key objectives of the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force has been to enhance such coordination. Meanwhile, the United Nations System Network on Rural Development and Food Security has helped to continue the dialogue among United Nations agencies to promote a system-wide approach to sustainable agriculture and rural development.

42. The global food and financial crises have overstretched the capacity and resources of system organizations such as WFP to deal with the increased number of people requiring food assistance. WFP has recently issued an urgent appeal for a "human rescue package" to provide the $5.2 billion needed to feed some 100 million people in 2009. Climate change is likely to worsen the situation by increasing uncertainty regarding food production and prices. Future interventions will require a better understanding of the effects of such crises on the stability and sustainability of food production and will need to build resilient agricultural systems that can adapt to stress and changes and absorb disturbances.

43. Some progress in this regard has already been made. WFP has developed a vulnerability analysis and mapping mechanism to assess risks and better understand

the impact of the financial crisis on food security. The model looks at food and fuel prices, growth in gross domestic product, trade, wage rates, employment, remittances and social safety net spending. It will help identify which countries are most vulnerable to increased hunger as a result of the financial crisis. It might also help in monitoring and tracking changes at the global and country levels, building on the experience gained in dealing with the food crisis. IFAD has begun introducing safeguard procedures for environmental management and sustainable development. FAO has included the concept of vulnerability to food insecurity in its work. Food security has four dimensions besides production: availability, accessibility, stability of food supply and utilization of food. In this model, socio-economic factors, for example market forces, may dominate impacts on food security in the short term, but environmental factors become crucial to ensuring stable and sustainable food production over the long term.

Recommendations

- United Nations organizations should find innovative ways to coordinate and integrate the broad range of activities related to sustainable agriculture and rural development under the sustainable agriculture and rural development approach.
- The United Nations system should strengthen its capacity to assess and analyse the impact of current crises and risks on the stability and sustainability of food production.
- The system should support national efforts to build resilient agricultural systems that can adapt to stress and changes and absorb disturbances.

E. Sustainable urbanization

44. In recent years, cities have acquired a central role in driving economic development in many developing countries. Today, 3 billion people — half of the world's population — live in cities. Fast, unregulated urban growth, however, has also increased urban poverty; 1 billion urban residents live in slums, condemned to a life of poverty and ill health, because of a lack of decent employment, inadequate infrastructure and exposure to air pollution. Cities have also increased environmental degradation, as they often encroach on land, forests and watersheds, threatening biodiversity beyond national and regional borders, and they are becoming major emitters of greenhouse gases.

45. Reducing the negative impact of cities and improving the lives of urban dwellers is inextricably linked to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Several major constraints, however, stand in the way of sustainable urbanization: a largely sectoral view of policymaking and allocation of resources, resulting in uncoordinated economic, social and environmental strategies; failure to recognize the spatial dimensions of sustainable development, resulting in the dispersion of resources, especially in urban areas; weak local governance, especially in developing countries, for land-use planning, housing and the provision of basic infrastructure and services; and competition for investment between urban, peri-urban and rural jurisdictions, resulting in the irrational use of land, water and other natural resources.

46. The United Nations system has played a critical role in drawing the attention of the international community to the issue of urbanization, urban poverty and environmental sustainability. The United Nations-Habitat, in collaboration with other partners, has underscored the dynamic nature of the sustainable urbanization process, including the environmental, socio-economic and political-institutional dimensions. This has contributed to the promotion of a sustainable development approach that links the alleviation of the conditions of the urban poor to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 7 and other Millennium Development Goals. Such an approach, however, has yet to be operationalized.

47. The integration of sustainable urbanization and urban poverty reduction in the activities of all United Nations organizations, in particular in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, continues to be a key challenge. The CEB framework on climate change, which is based on studies of the socio-economic and demographic impact of climate change on countries and cities, is a step in that direction. The High-level Committee on Programmes also agreed to table a thematic discussion on "Urban poverty or urbanization: challenges and opportunities", for a future CEB session.

Recommendations

- The United Nations system organizations should mainstream sustainable urbanization, urban poverty reduction and slum upgrading in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in urban areas.
- The United Nations Development Group should facilitate the inclusion of sustainable urbanization concerns in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines and in system programmes supporting national poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies.

F. Enhancing social equality, including the empowerment of women

48. Poverty, income inequalities, unequal rural-urban development, distribution of assets, access to social services and security and direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, race, disability or ethnicity are all major causes of social exclusion. Poverty and social exclusion deprive the economy of precious human resources to promote sustained economic growth and increase environmental degradation as a result of the suboptimal or inefficient use of natural resources. Recent global crises and socio-demographic changes have exacerbated the problem of social exclusion by increasing unemployment, worsening labour conditions, intensifying economic insecurity and adding tens of millions to the ranks of people living in poverty worldwide.

49. A growing international consensus is emerging on the need for comprehensive development strategies to address the economic, social and environmental impact of these crises in an integrated manner. The World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995, recognized that poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, and social integration are all interrelated and mutually reinforcing objectives. Achieving those objectives requires coordinated and mutually reinforcing social, economic and employment policies that promote social justice, economic recovery and growth and are economically and environmentally sustainable.

50. United Nations system organizations have long been committed to those objectives. Many agencies have actively supported mainstreaming employment, social protection, access to basic social services and gender equality into national development and poverty eradication strategies and creating legal and institutional frameworks promoting social inclusion. The *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*, developed to assist all system agencies integrating the goals of the ILO decent work agenda into their work in support of national development strategies, is the most comprehensive system-wide effort in this regard. The agenda constitutes an important step towards the integration of social equality and social justice concerns into economic planning decisions. The collaboration between FAO and ILO to promote decent rural employment is another important effort, as is the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, aimed at ensuring gender-responsive climate change decisions and initiatives.

Recommendations

- The United Nations system should promote a greater understanding of the social impact of current crises in order to support national efforts to build more equal and inclusive societies.
- System organizations should continue to integrate social equality and social justice concerns into the formulation and implementation of programme and activities supporting national sustainable development strategies.

G. Strengthening institutions for sustainable development

51. While there is no shortage of regimes, institutions and other arrangements at the global, regional and national levels dedicated to addressing the broad range of economic, social and environmental challenges of sustainable development, a coherent and integrated institutional underpinning capable of balancing competing interests and fostering economic, social, and environmental assets is still lacking.

52. Effective sustainable development institutions at all levels should be able to integrate the concept of sustainability across the whole range of economic, social and environmental activities in ways that stimulate innovation and economic growth without compromising the environment and social cohesion; deliver decisions based on long-term sustainability rather than short-term demands only; and ensure that the true cost of natural resource depletion is reflected in market and other economic interactions.

53. At the international level, multilateral environmental agreements have addressed particular environmental problems, including ozone depletion, climate change and biodiversity loss. Other regimes related to trade, finance, development and other fields of policymaking also play a key role in addressing some aspects of sustainable development. The coordination between those regimes, however, is weak, resulting in weak sustainable development governance, which also reflects the persisting disagreement about what constitutes an effective and appropriate approach to sustainable development. The Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council have played and continue to play a critical role in building consensus and operationalizing the concept of sustainable development by fostering coherence and coordination across policy areas and promoting integrated mechanisms to manage critical sectors. Their implementation of those efforts, however, continues to be a challenge.

54. At the national level, the governance of sustainable development tends to be dispersed among various government institutions and regimes, which often do not coordinate with each other. The role of Governments is central to ensuring a comprehensive approach for meeting national goals, balancing competing interests and picking up signals of economic decline, social exclusion and environmental degradation. This requires all parts of government to come together in formulating and implementing national strategies to address sustainable development challenges. Governments, however, often lack the human and financial capacities, as well as the political commitment, to promote sustainable development objectives and provide meaningful checks and balances to enforce them, including rules and norms limiting access to and the use of assets central to human well-being.

55. The United Nations plays a critical role in setting the global sustainable development agenda and supporting the efforts of Governments to implement it through their national development strategies. United Nations system organizations and coordinating mechanisms, such as CEB, the Environmental Management Group and the United Nations Development Group, have made considerable progress in strengthening the United Nations system support in that regard by enhancing policy coordination across environmental activities; mainstreaming the environmental dimension across all system activities; and addressing issues of environmental governance. At the national level, United Nations country teams and various United Nations agencies have also focused on promoting the environmental dimension in national sustainable development strategies.

56. Despite those efforts, the environmental dimension still remains somewhat separate from the economic and social activities of the system. Mainstreaming environmental concerns in all system activities will require removing existing institutional barriers to allow the system to come together in all three dimensions of sustainable development. The creation of issue-based clustering arrangements across environmental, economic and social dimensions could be one way to overcome institutional barriers, promote collective thinking and action, enhance coordination and encourage accountability towards the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

Recommendations

- The Economic and Social Council should play a stronger role in mainstreaming the concept of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations.
- The Commission on Sustainable Development should play a central role in revitalizing the concept of sustainable development and in enhancing its relevance as a guiding framework for all United Nation system activities.
- The United Nations system should promote special initiatives to help develop sustainable development institutions, such as national and local sustainable development councils and other coordinating mechanisms.
- The United Nations system should support national efforts to build human resources capacity to analyse, formulate and implement a sustainable development approach.

IV. Lessons learned from national sustainable development strategies

57. Sustainable development is a long-term goal that needs to balance competing interests and priorities. Recent global crises and the growing impact of climate change have underscored the urgency of finding new and more effective ways to reconcile different priorities and deal with the challenges of sustainable development. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, countries were called on to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005. Although that target has not been fully achieved, 82 States Members of the United Nations reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development or the Department of Economic and Social Affairs that they were implementing a national sustainable development strategy as of 2007. Moreover, in the past decade several countries have developed innovative mechanisms, including economic, regulatory, expenditure or institutional mechanisms, that have promoted more comprehensive and strategic approaches to sustainable development.

58. Some countries have developed innovative ways to monitor the various aspects of their economy, analyse the inherent trade-offs and interlinkages among the three dimensions of sustainable development and make critical and necessary adaptations to their policies and strategies. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for example, has used various approaches and tools to examine the linkages between economic, social and environmental systems. The integrated policy appraisal process was introduced to encourage the use of environmental appraisals as part of policymaking and review processes. It was designed to assist government departments in assessing the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of their policy proposals.

59. Other countries, including Mexico, have been able to make significant progress in achieving their sustainable development objectives by integrating sustainable development principles directly into their national development planning and budgetary processes, rather than creating a separate process. Others have established cross-sectoral institutional arrangements to lead their sustainable development process across government departments. The Philippines, for example, has established a Council for Sustainable Development, chaired by the National Economic Development Authority, to lead its sustainable development process, which has kept sustainable development objectives at the centre of governmental decision-making. In the United Kingdom, several Government departments, including in the areas of trade and industry, health and defence, have published their own sustainable development strategies to complement national and regional ones, strengthening their overall impact. On the other hand, in countries where the sustainable development process was led by the environment department only, the sustainable development approach has had more limited impact on governmental decisions.

60. Several countries were able to promote sustainable development effectively when they coordinated their national, subnational and local efforts. In the Republic of Korea, for example, the National Action Plan for Agenda 21 fostered the adoption of local Agenda 21 initiatives (adopted in 213 out of 249 regional government units) through the provision of financial and capacity support and led to the establishment of the Council for Local Agenda 21 to better coordinate the implementation process.

This helped to establish a comprehensive framework for long-term sustainable development planning, both cross-sectoral and sectoral, with a high degree of spatial diversification (national, regional and local).

61. Most countries use participatory multi-stakeholder approaches in the elaboration of national sustainable development strategies, even though the extent of the engagement of business organizations, civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, trade unions, academia and other major groups varies. At the same time, public participation in the monitoring and, in particular, the implementation of such strategies remains limited.

62. Some countries have successfully adopted cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary approaches, such as integrated water resource management, to manage their natural resources, often as a component of their sustainable development strategies. Such approaches have encouraged maximizing economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

63. Most countries are addressing major cross-cutting issues such as climate change in their national sustainable development strategies, but the scope and focus vary across countries. Generally, climate change mitigation is covered more prominently and specifically than adaptation. Integrating climate change into such strategies enables countries not only to harness the co-benefits of climate change response measures for other sustainable development objectives, but also to realize and highlight the climate change benefits of measures aimed at, inter alia, increasing energy security, ensuring sustainable forest management, implementing integrated water resource management or strengthening disaster risk management. A national sustainable development strategy also provides a natural framework for simultaneously incorporating intergenerational and intragenerational equity concerns into national climate change response measures.

64. Despite the increasing reliance on markets to allocate resources and the potential impact of market users on environmental and social systems, economic instruments have been underutilized in tackling key sustainable development issues. Very few countries, for example, leverage instruments such as environmental fiscal reform and emissions trading to achieve sustainable development.

65. The United Nations system can learn some important lessons from this broad range of experiences for its support for national strategies for sustainable development. For example, the systematic development of quantifiable and measurable targets for sustainable development helps to increase the focus on and commitment to that goal; understanding the linkages between economic, social and environmental issues facilitates the formulation of more comprehensive and effective sustainable development strategies; a clear mandate and institutional arrangements across government departments to lead the sustainable development process helps to place sustainable development objectives at the centre of government decision-making; assessing policy initiatives in an integrated manner with a view to understanding their economic, social and environmental impact helps in identifying leverage points to influence sustainable development objectives, identify emerging issues and learn from and adapt to change; coordination between sectors (for example, departments) and cross-sectoral strategic approaches (for example, poverty reduction strategy papers and environmental management plans) is essential to ensuring that national strategies and issue-specific policies are mutually reinforcing; and institutionalized cross-sectoral participation is essential to understanding and addressing the complex interdependence of economic, social and environmental systems.

Recommendations

The United Nations system should:

- Encourage and facilitate the participation of countries in shared learning and review mechanisms on national sustainable development strategies.
- Promote cross-sectoral approaches in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development.
- Encourage and facilitate the incorporation of sustainability principles into sectoral policymaking and strategic plans, including through integrated appraisal mechanisms.
- Promote cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, participatory networks to address and find solutions to specific sustainable development challenges (e.g., water scarcity, desertification, land degradation).
- Help in building the national capacity of statistical offices to develop and implement quantifiable and measurable targets for sustainable development and integrated sets of sustainability indicators.
- Help countries to understand and use effectively a mix of policy instruments, including regulatory, economic and information disclosure instruments, to address sustainable development challenges.

V. Emerging challenges

66. National efforts to promote sustainable development face multiple and interconnected challenges, amplified by recent global crises. The dramatic increase in food prices has considerably reduced the purchasing power of low-income, food-deficit countries, increasing their poverty and hunger levels. The intensification of climate change events and environmental degradation is putting at risk the safety and livelihood of a growing number of people. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and the growth of the population, which is projected to reach 9 billion in 2050, are accelerating environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources, while unregulated urban growth is significantly increasing urban poverty. Widening inequalities, unemployment, underemployment and poor working conditions are becoming a major obstacle to achieving sustainable development worldwide, while slow economic growth, export declines and loss of foreign exchange earning are reversing the economic and social gains already made by many countries.

67. Facing these challenges will be difficult and costly. The High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis estimates that in the current scenario the cost of facing short- and long-term sustainable development challenges will be an additional $25 billion to $40 billion to be invested every year for food and nutrition security, social protection, agricultural development and the better functioning of food markets. Approximately one third of the additional resources would be needed for immediate food assistance and short-term budgetary and balance-of-payments support, with two thirds needed for investments in rural infrastructure, education, clean water and agricultural research.

68. The United Nations has made important strides in devising a coordinated, comprehensive and strategic approach to current crises (for example, the establishment by the Secretary-General of the High-level Task Force) to promote a unified response globally and nationally to the broad range of challenges posed by the crisis and address the immediate funding shortfalls for food emergencies. Recently, CEB formulated a number of system-wide initiatives — so-called joint crisis initiatives — to respond to the multiple crises currently faced by Governments and the international community, including the financial crisis and global recession. The aim is to form a broad-based perspective on the economic, environmental and social impact of the crisis and its implications for the work of the United Nations system from a policy and programme angle and to identify actions required in response. CEB has developed a similar approach to deal with climate change.

VI. Conclusions

69. **The United Nations system has made important strides in strengthening its role in support of sustainable development, as evidenced by several system initiatives in some of the key areas identified in the ministerial declaration. The system was able to adopt cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary approaches to address a number of specific challenges, including climate change, water resource management, energy supply and agricultural and rural development, and their economic, social and environmental dimensions. The participatory nature of those approaches has also facilitated greater coordination within the system, as well as among government agencies and departments dealing with these challenges, and strengthened understanding of the interlinkages among different dimensions of sustainable development and policy trade-offs.**

70. **Those efforts could be scaled up to involve all relevant partners. Similar issue-based system-wide approaches could also be applied to the broad range of challenges and sectors that have an impact on sustainable development, including urbanization, social equality and institutional development. This might also require closer cooperation between the High-level Committee on Programmes of the CEB and the United Nations Development Group to ensure that such cross-sectoral, issue-based approaches become an integral part of United Nations system efforts in support of national development and poverty eradication strategies.**

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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/210 of 19 December 2007, in which a biennial reporting cycle for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established, beginning in 2009, through a report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council.

In the last two years, the Institute has undertaken a major strategic reform. Moreover, it is excelling in programmatic achievements. Both the reforms of UNITAR and its programmatic achievements are the focus of the present report.

From a financial perspective, UNITAR has doubled its income in the last five years. The revised budget for 2008-2009 is 57 per cent higher than the actual expenditures of the prior period. Ninety-five per cent of the current budget is secured through special purpose grants. Globally, the Institute's ability to deliver on its mandate is positive with the exception of one area, that of core diplomatic training, an issue also raised in the present report.

The report recommends that UNITAR can play an important role in the overall effort to ensure more efficient service provision for training and research within the United Nations system.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/210, in which a biennial reporting cycle for UNITAR was established, beginning in 2009, through a report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council.[1] The present document follows the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session (A/62/377).

2. As the first comprehensive report on the Institute's activities to the Economic and Social Council, it presents concrete actions taken and progress made in implementing the ongoing strategic reform of the Institute, a plan first shared with the Institute's Board of Trustees in July 2007 and referred to in the previous report of the Secretary-General (ibid.). The reform is pinned on four strategic priorities, namely: strengthening institutional capacity for training and research; enhancing human capital; building and strengthening strategic partnerships; and rationalizing the organizational structure. Major inroads have been made on all fronts, as described in section II of the present report, on taking the reforms forward.

3. Eighty thousand beneficiaries will have taken advantage of the Institute's capacity development opportunities in 2008-2009. Since 2007, the collective vision has been to transform the Institute into a centre of excellence, measured by international standards, recognized within and outside the United Nations system, for standard-setting methodologies, high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems. In the light of calls for greater coherence within the United Nations system, and of General Assembly resolution 62/210, which, inter alia, reaffirmed the importance of a coordinated United Nations system-wide approach to research and training, section III of the report summarizes areas of achievement beginning by describing the Institute's leadership in delivering through integrated training service platforms; providing a privileged space for strategic policy thinking; strengthening the Institute's capacity development activities and approaches through innovative training methodologies; making in-roads in the area of governance training; and implementing measures to ensure results-based management in all areas of activity.

4. Section IV highlights indicators of how the reforms have been received within the United Nations compliance and oversight mechanisms. In less than two years, the Institute has: started introducing results-based management in its planning and budgeting, hence initiating a gradual shift in management culture; succeeded in implementing all but one outstanding recommendation of the Board of Auditors (see section IV); been recognized for its authority to delegate key areas of competency, thereby reaffirming its status as an autonomous Institute; and been supported by a reinvigorated and fully engaged Board of Trustees. The reforms and areas of achievement have translated into greater credibility and recognition of the Institute, as described in section IV of the report on measuring through results.

[1] In compliance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 62/210, in which the Assembly decided to streamline the reporting arrangements of UNITAR through: (a) consolidation of the reports of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the Institute; (b) submission of the new consolidated report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the General Assembly; and (c) establishment of a biennial reporting cycle starting from 2009.

5. Section V of the report details the financial situation of the Institute. UNITAR is demonstrating significant programme expansion and has doubled its income in the last five years. The revised budget for 2008-2009 is 57 per cent higher than the actual expenditures of the prior period. Ninety-five per cent of the current budget is secured through special purpose grants. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Financing of the core diplomatic training activities of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research" (A/63/592), from a financial perspective, the Institute's ability to deliver on its mandate is positive with the exception of core diplomatic training.

6. In section VI of the report, areas for continued progress point to where efforts will be concentrated in 2009 and beyond, effectively constituting a second phase in the reform of the Institute and moving towards the establishment of results-based management across the Institute's work; research on quality development and the establishment of a quality development framework to provide a basis for future implementation of quality standards, mechanisms and certification processes; the sustained utilization of technology-enhanced learning; and securing more adequate and predictable support for core diplomatic training. Positioning the Institute as a learning organization is also an ongoing effort, one which will be at the heart of efforts in the current and future bienniums.

7. In section VII, it is recommended that given the synergetic effect of the current joint leadership of UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College, the Institute can play an important role in laying the groundwork for more efficient service provision for training (and research) within the United Nations system.[2]

II. Taking the reforms forward

8. Prior to 2007, rather than a coherent Institute, UNITAR operated as a combination of stand-alone programmes. Since the introduction of the strategic reform plan, UNITAR is reaching the objectives set forth therein. The present section specifies actions taken on each of the four strategic directions identified in the reform phase of the Institute. It also provides information on actions yet to be taken in 2009 and beyond.

A. Strengthening institutional capacity for training and research

9. Regarding the first area of reform, strengthening institutional capacity for training and research, and in line with resolution 62/210, in which the General Assembly reaffirmed the relevance of the capacity development-related research activities of the Institute, UNITAR has established a research department as a central authority focused on knowledge systems. Through its research work on knowledge systems, the Institute is enhancing its capacity to develop knowledge, skills and attributes linked to particular forms of employment. The new research department will support the Institute's training activities by creating learning environments that are conducive to modern methods, pedagogies, and tools,

[2] Assistant Secretary-General Carlos Lopes is Executive Director of UNITAR and also Director of the United Nations System Staff College.

including technology-enhanced learning. The Institute is also actively incorporating tailored instructional methods based on adult learning principles.

10. UNITAR is currently piloting innovative learning tools supported by knowledge sharing and inter-institutional collaboration. As an example, the Institute has begun to develop a long-term project on training methodologies, beginning with terminology, methods and tools. Designed on a web 2.0 technology, this tool will be available to the United Nations system at large.

11. As a centre of excellence in standard-setting training methodologies, UNITAR is also scaling up its quality-assurance mechanisms aiming for the adoption of specific quality standards on its training activities (see sect. VI on areas for continued progress). The long-term objective is to add value to beneficiaries, delivering certified training programmes, which will contribute to personal development and career advancement (see also sect. VI).

B. Enhancing human capital

12. Regarding the second area of reform aimed at enhancing human capital, UNITAR has invested in maintaining and securing superior personnel so as to deliver fully on its mandate in the context of a new paradigm, one built around the principle of results-based management (see sect. III on programmatic achievements). Among others, UNITAR has secured several senior secondments from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

13. Moreover, concerted efforts have been made to align recruitment and placement practices within the Institute to support the implementation of a transparent, rigorous, competitive selection process to ensure not only a qualified work force but one that is gender and geographically balanced. In 2008, a new Appointment and Promotions Board was established within UNITAR.

14. In terms of gender distribution, UNITAR is one of the two United Nations entities that achieved overall gender balance among professional staff in 2007 (see A/63/364). In 2008, the geographic imbalances in staffing were effectively reversed, with six out of eight new recruits coming from developing countries. UNITAR has one of the youngest staffs in the United Nations system, with an average age of 43 years,[3] while the average age of United Nations staff is 45. Further, the Institute has recently dedicated, for the first time, a corporate training budget for its own staff to ensure their access to continuous learning and skills tuning. The aim of the training strategy is to sustain professional development and learning, building an organizational environment where staff development is valued, supported and rewarded, and a commitment to continuous learning is demonstrated at all levels.

C. Building and strengthening strategic partnerships

15. Regarding the third area of reform, in early 2008, UNITAR began to implement its partnerships and resource mobilization strategy upon the approval of

[3] This average includes "UNITAR fellows" contracts, a category that relates to positions of an average duration of three years which ensure flexibility and greater efficiency in administering medium-term positions.

the Institute's Board of Trustees. This strategy also responds to the General Assembly's request to develop further and expand the scope of partnerships (resolution 62/210, para. 4).

16. The overall objectives of the strategy are: (a) to strengthen ties within other United Nations system agencies and more specifically with other United Nations research and training institutions; (b) to enhance the overall performance capacity of the Institute by developing strong and sustainable relationships with strategic donor countries and with the private sector and foundations; (c) to strengthen the Institute's capacities to deliver on training requirements by building a strong bridge with recognized academic institutions in order to develop comprehensive e-learning courses in multiple fields of ongoing activity; and (d) to establish a regional presence for United Nations capacity-building through UNITAR support offices and in-country capacity-building and programming.

17. As early as 2007, strategic focus has been placed on the Nordic countries to strengthen support to the Institute. Among others, cooperation has been initiated with academic institutions in Finland, Norway and Sweden in the fields of peace security diplomacy and humanitarian affairs.

18. In 2008, relationships with a broader community of supporters and collaborators have been developed including the following countries: Brazil, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Oman, the Russian Federation, Spain, South Africa and Turkey.

19. For instance, a key agreement was reached with the Government of Spain, making it the first ranked public donor to the Institute as of 2008 (see sect. V). The agreement touches on a broad range of areas for collaboration which are defined as follows: strengthening the Institute's capacity to deliver training activities in the Spanish language to address the needs of Ibero-American countries; strengthening capacity and implementing recently established recommendations in the fields of international migration and development (see sect. III); and enhancing the application of knowledge systems innovation approaches (see sect. VI).

20. In addition and further to the Board's recommendations, discussions with Brazil and South Africa have been initiated for the establishment of representational offices in Brasilia and Pretoria.

21. Furthermore, in addition to earmarked funding, efforts to increase non-earmarked funds to the Institute have intensified. In line with the recommendation of 2008 of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in which the Advisory Committee recommended that the Institute and the Executive Director continue to make further efforts to increase all voluntary contributions, the Institute's fund-raising efforts for non-earmarked funds have increased significantly. In 2008-2009, voluntary contributions amounted to US$ 1,128,979 compared to original forecasts of $850,000. In addition, some countries have indicated that they may increase voluntary contributions over the course of 2010.

D. Rationalizing the organizational structure

22. The fourth area of reform deals with rationalizing the organizational structure of the Institute. Guided by the drive for greater coherence and accountability, clear

lines of authority and accountability have been instituted with regular performance evaluations and systematic reviews of all job descriptions. A more vertical structure was adopted in the Institute, with three departments (training, research and support services), each to be run by Directors who report directly to the Executive Director. The directorship positions are expected to be filled in the course of the next biennium (see sect. V).

23. In addition and similar to the actions outlined in General Assembly resolution 63/250 on human resources management, since 2008, the conditions governing UNITAR personnel contracts have been harmonized so as to ensure efficiency, equity and consistency across the Institute. Furthermore, UNITAR has been granted the authority from the Secretary-General to classify posts up to the P-5 level (see sect. IV on measuring through results).

24. Last, new integrated central support services have been established in order to ensure coherence within UNITAR, and of UNITAR vis-à-vis the outside. These support services include sections for: human resources; finance and administration; partnerships and resource mobilization; communications and information technology support; and representational offices.

III. Programmatic achievements

25. In lieu of a report on activities, the present section focuses on results, presenting areas of achievements in the Institute's efforts to: deliver integrated approaches to learning; provide a privileged platform for strategic policy thinking; strengthen its capacity-development activities and approaches through innovative training methodologies; establish in-roads in the area of global governance training and support; and ensure the gradual introduction of results-based management tools in all of its areas of activity.

A. Environment

26. Each year, close to 2,500 beneficiaries receive environment-related training from UNITAR.[4] The Institute has established a solid reputation in specific areas of environmental capacity-building linked to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. As part of the Institute's reform, an overarching Environment Unit was created in 2007. In 2008-2009, UNITAR developed an "Internal Environment Strategy 2009-2010", which was presented and welcomed by its Board in January 2009. The strategy facilitates information exchange and collaboration on environmental activities across some nine different programmes and sections of the Institute that engage in environmental training. It covers the thematic areas of climate change, chemicals and waste management, environmental governance and law, and biodiversity.

27. The overarching goal of UNITAR environment activities is to strengthen the capacity of partner countries, organizations and individuals to address identified capacity gaps and to reach environmental goals, through innovative training and

[4] This figure relates to training in the field of chemicals and waste management, climate change, and environmental governance. It is expected to increase further in 2009, given initiation of new activities, including in the field of biodiversity.

research. Relevant activities build on best practices, strengthening synergies with partners, and are conducted jointly with United Nations partners, consistent with the principle of delivering as one. By focusing on training design, delivery and evaluation, UNITAR seeks to become a recognized service provider in the United Nations system for environmental training and capacity development.

28. In the area of climate change, for example, the Institute has developed jointly with UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change the concept for a One United Nations Training Service Platform for Climate Change. The aim of such a platform is to provide services in the areas of knowledge management, joint training material development and training delivery related to the implementation of the anticipated new international regime on climate change. The platform is closely linked to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination process which facilitates a One United Nations approach in the area of climate change. In the area of chemicals waste and management, UNITAR is supporting projects in more than 60 countries during the course of 2008-2009 to develop capacity concerning the implementation of international chemicals agreements such as the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. All relevant projects are implemented in partnership with member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals.

29. Further, UNITAR is committed to leading United Nations efforts in the area of climate neutrality (see A/63/592). To achieve this goal, UNITAR has established an ambitious "Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy: 2009-2010", which was adopted by the Institute's Board of Trustees in January 2009 for immediate implementation.

B. Strategic policy discussions

30. The Institute offers a privileged platform for high-level strategic discussions, reaching out annually to over 2,500 decision makers. In turn, this role has contributed to raising the profile of UNITAR within and outside the United Nations system as a convener of high-quality meetings dedicated to enhancing knowledge, sharing lessons learned and facilitating dialogue on key policy issues among United Nations senior management and the international community as a whole. UNITAR has strengthened its position as a knowledge hub for the United Nations system and external stakeholders, serving global decision-making processes in key locations, in particular Geneva, New York and Turin.

31. UNITAR has become an important convenor of major policy discussions among senior United Nations officials. Since 2007, every year at the end of August or in early September, the Institute co-organizes the annual retreat of the Secretary-General and his senior staff in Turin, in partnership with the United Nations System Staff College and the Department of Management of the Secretariat.

32. In addition, since 2001, UNITAR gathers the Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General each year in Switzerland for a strategy meeting dedicated to enhancing United Nations practice in the fields of prevention and conflict resolution. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General Seminar, now (also) organized in association with the United Nations System Staff College, brings together the heads of United Nations peace operations from around the world with the senior United Nations staff and heads of agencies.

responsible for the prevention and resolution of conflict. Since 2007, this annual seminar has taken on further strategic relevance since it is dovetailed by parallel internal departmental heads of mission conferences organized respectively with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in conjunction with the Department of Field Support. The Peacebuilding Support Office has also been actively involved in the deliberations.

33. Finally, UNITAR organizes high-level policy discussions that are open to the public in the form of the Geneva Lecture Series. Jointly launched with the United Nations Office at Geneva in 2008, the Series has included the first ever public town hall meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and has since followed with other events featuring, for example, Nobel Peace Prize winners and renowned personalities. Each lecture gathers no less than 1,200 participants. In contrast to the Secretary-General and United Nations Secretariat retreats, for which proceedings and results are kept confidential for use by United Nations senior management, the Geneva Lecture Series initiative intends to synthesize and disseminate timely knowledge on policy issues being discussed through a dedicated public website and discussion forums, organized in partnership with various media outlets. The Geneva Lecture Series website builds on the Institute's efforts to enhance its communication and visibility with a new dedicated Internet site that provides a single multilingual entry point to the Institute's services and knowledge databases.

C. Satellite applications (new technologies)

34. Progressively, UNITAR is establishing itself as the methodological partner of choice of Member States and for the United Nations system based on its innovative training methodologies and technologies employed.

35. For example, UNITAR, through its programme on operational satellite applications (UNOSAT), is now the United Nations reference for efficient and proficient satellite-based analysis with internal capability to acquire, process and analyse data from all commercial and scientific satellites.[5] The Institute mobilizes a wide network of space partners worldwide. These include the European Space Agency (ESA), the national space agencies of Canada, France and Norway, national satellite operators and providers in France, Italy, Norway, Turkey, and the United States of America, and a number of other companies and scientific entities working in satellite applications, and the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters formed by ESA together with Argentina, Canada, France, India, Japan, the United States Geological Survey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Together, these space partners enable UNITAR to carry out research on new applications and to deliver satellite solutions to humanitarian and development experts within the United Nations, national Governments, and a growing number of non-governmental organizations. Other types of partners complete this network, such as the United States Department of State, the European Union Joint Research Centre, the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN), Google Maps, and so forth. In 2008, over 250 complex maps and analyses were produced by UNITAR

[5] In January 2009, UNOSAT became fully integrated into the UNITAR research department, such that its technologies and applied research are now streamlined into UNITAR training activities in various fields.

experts in this field, based on satellite imagery and data bought from commercial providers or acquired from partners.

36. Indeed, to date, UNITAR provides geographic information and analysis to most of the international humanitarian community and a large number of national and development users. In 2008 alone, it was requested to activate its rapid mapping support in 38 humanitarian emergencies.

37. The Institute's satellite imagery analysis is employed as a decision support tool by United Nations system agencies and programmes in the fields of emergency response as well as recovery and development planning. Through its research and innovation in the area of satellite applications, UNITAR is extending its reach of beneficiaries in additional fields such as peace and security, human rights, disaster reduction and environment protection.

38. The knowledge generated through sustained research and application is transferred to beneficiaries through dedicated and standard training modules spanning from basic geographic information systems (GIS) know-how to the use of geographic information for peacebuilding. In 2008, UNITAR offered professional training to about 100 national experts and experts in training, in Asia, Africa and Central America. The Institute is expanding its outreach for technology-based training methodologies in collaboration with national space agencies and the European Space Agency (ESA).

D. Support to governance

39. In the field of global governance, the Institute is making important headway in responding to capacity-development needs and niches, be it in the fields of local development, public finance and trade, international migration, or public administration.

1. Local development

40. UNITAR is one of the first partners in the United Nations system to have extended a formal link for training opportunities with local authorities in the area of local development. With the objective of operationalizing access to basic services, in the last five years UNITAR has become the hub for information, communication and training between local authorities and other parts of the United Nations system, academic institutions and other local actors such as public and private companies and civil society. Since 2007, 1,620 local authorities strengthened their capacities to deliver integrated approaches to sustainable development and urbanization through UNITAR training courses, which are implemented by a network of International Training Centres for Local Actors/Authorities (CIFAL) around the world.

41. In 2009, in its resolution 22/8, the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) adopted guidelines on access to basic services for all. In this resolution as in others that preceded it, UNITAR continues to be the explicit reference for engaging local stakeholders in the process of developing, and now of implementing, these guidelines. The guidelines will also be

2. Public finance and trade

42. Now more than at any other time, UNITAR support in the field of public finance and trade to Government officials from developing countries, including least developed countries, and economies in transition is of critical relevance.

43. Each year, the Institute offers 50 six-week online courses benefiting some 2,500 senior and middle-level officials in ministries of finance, planning, trade as well as in central banks. The principal objectives of the courses are to learn about efficient and effective public spending, and how to manage public finance and expenditures. The Institute thus fills an important niche by addressing issues relating to financial governance, poverty reduction strategies, trade, intellectual property, financial regulation, financia' egotiations, capital market development as well as debt management. In addition to strengthening capacities in this field, UNITAR provides opportunities for networking among Government and private sector officials, and supports the establishment of communities of practice to sustain training within local and regional institutions.

3. International migration

44. Human mobility is an area of global governance for which the Secretary-General has called upon greater engagement by the United Nations (see General Assembly resolution 63/225 on international migration and development). For two decades, UNITAR has provided capacity-building to Government officials on migration and refugee issues. As from 2010, it will focus on capacity-building on the African continent and Ibero-America regions. In 2009, UNITAR signed a comprehensive agreement with the International Organization for Migration covering various areas of programming, including the fields of international migration law; national pilot projects; policy seminars; satellite imagery support, and others.

45. In the second half of 2009, UNITAR will chair the Global Migration Group, the inter-agency coordinating body for 14 United Nations and non-United Nations bodies that work in this field. UNITAR will convey a collective strategy note, on behalf of the Group, to the third Global Forum on Migration and Development taking place in Athens on 4 and 5 November 2009. Furthermore, UNITAR continues to act as the reliable and informative convener of seminars at United Nations Headquarters in New York to inform, educate and advance policy thinking and dialogue on migration-related topics. In 2008, at the seventh coordination meeting on international migration convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, it was recognized that UNITAR plays a central role in maintaining the centrality of international migration on the United Nations calendar in the context of: the biennial resolution of the General Assembly, the General Assembly High Level Dialogues (2006 and 2013), and the Global Forum process. Since 2007, close to a thousand beneficiaries have taken part in migration-related trainings provided by UNITAR.

4. Public administration

46. In line with a note by the Secretariat entitled "The human factor in capacity-

responding to the calls of countries requesting support to build the capacities of their public sector.

47. For example, beginning in 2009, UNITAR is working with the Government of Cape Verde to elaborate a national capacity-development strategy, given that individual and institutional capacity are central pillars of the public sector reform in Cape Verde. Upon the request from the Ministry of State Reform, the Institute is leading the governmental initiative to design a capacity-development plan for public servants, which is at the core of enhancing the effectiveness and competitiveness of that country's public sector. Similar requests have been addressed to UNITAR by several countries. In partnership with UNDP, a new online course on democratic governance will also be launched in 2009.

E. Peacekeeping

48. UNITAR is introducing a results-based management framework for all of its areas of capacity development (see sect. VI on areas for continued progress). In 2008, in line with outstanding recommendations of the Board of Auditors, UNITAR completely reorganized its activities in the field of peacekeeping. The newly established Peacekeeping Training Programme will offer a results-measured, systematic and more comprehensive preparation for civilian, military and police personnel eager to serve in peacekeeping and peace support operations.

49. The peacekeeping curriculum is being established and will be offered online as well as in the form of face-to-face training activities, depending on the subject matter and the target audience. In response to the Secretary-General's call for support from within the United Nations system in the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006) and 1820 (2008), a first course on protection of civilians in peacekeeping and peace support operations is being developed, with a specific module on sexual exploitation and abuse in partnership with Open University United Kingdom.

50. The large number of distance learning beneficiaries of the Institute's previous peacekeeping training programme may have responded to a gap in training requirements in this field. However, UNITAR needed to overhaul its offer in this domain to improve standards and to build credibility.

IV. Measuring through results

51. Buttressed by the institutional reforms within UNITAR and the significant achievements in developing above-par capacity-development content, the Institute's results can be measured through the recognition it has gained from oversight entities within the United Nations system. A handful of examples are provided herein: the Office of Legal Affairs issued for the first time, a consolidated opinion concerning the parameters of the Institute's autonomous status; UNITAR responded with the implementation of many outstanding past recommendations of the Board of Auditors; and UNITAR benefits from an engaged Board of Trustees and supportive

52. Furthermore, the Executive Director of UNITAR was granted the delegation of authority in two important areas, the first dealing with the classification of posts (up to P-5 level) as mentioned in section I; the other in the area of procurement.

53. In addition, with a view to strengthening efficiency, transparency and accountability, for the first time, in November 2007, UNITAR submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions a revised budget format using the standard results-based budgeting framework. In line with the principle of greater transparency within the Institute's administration, all audit reports are available as from 2009 to the members of the UNITAR Board of Trustees. An important dimension of UNITAR efforts on results-based communication will be to introduce real-time online access programme budget implementation for the Board of Trustees, the auditors and the Advisory Committee. This dimension will be addressed and specific actors and action will be identified during the 2010-2011 programme budget process with the goal of making the Institute a front-runner in the United Nations system concerning transparency.

54. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/377), in terms of accountability, in the last year, UNITAR succeeded in addressing all outstanding recommendations of the Board of Auditors except one relating to information technology (IT).[6] The IT budget has been increased to enable these recommendations to be gradually addressed, and an IT steering committee to overview the Institute's IT strategy was established in 2009. More generally, current and future recommendations of the auditors will be addressed by the monitoring and evaluation section that will be established in 2009 (see sect. VI).

55. Finally, UNITAR is supported by an engaged and pre-eminent governance body, its Board of Trustees, which since 2007, meets on a semi-annual basis. The Institute is also guided by a solid set of oversight mechanisms and policy directives within the Institute, which includes several new internal boards such as one for personnel issues, one for the implementation of the delegation of procurement authority granted to the current Executive Director, and so on.

V. Financial situation of the Institute

56. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 was revised and approved by the Institute's Board of Trustees at its session held in January 2009 (after the original had been presented in December 2007). The revised financial information reflects positive developments that have occurred during 2008. More generally, the funding of the UNITAR special purpose grants continues to increase satisfactorily. However, while the non-earmarked voluntary contributions to the General Fund have also increased, that type of funding remains low.

57. In accordance with the interim financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2008, the overall income showed an increase of 45 per cent, from $12,273,028 in 2006 to $17,766,256 in 2008. Expenditure increased by 33 per cent, from $13,469,811 in 2006 to $17,968,733 in 2008. The excess of expenditure over

[6] The recommendation in question relates to the implementation of ISO 17799 within UNITAR.

income is attributable to the fact that reserves were built up from contributions paid in advance in previous years for projects that were implemented in 2008.

58. A tight monitoring of funds and cash flow has been established in the Institute following a prudent approach to future commitments. New posts are established only when funds are available and decisions are taken with minimum risk. Pending receipt of funds, the establishment of Directors' posts has been deferred (see sect. II).

VI. Areas for continued progress

59. The strategic plan for the biennium 2010-2011, which is to be developed through a participatory process in the second half of 2009, will comprise an important milestone in articulating the vision and set of supporting objectives for UNITAR for the next biennium. The items described in the present section as areas for continued progress constitute an indicative list. They include: the establishment of results-based management across the Institute's work; research on quality development and engagement with other actors to establish quality standards and deliver certified training; expansion of technology-enhanced learning tools; and securing more adequate and predictable support for core diplomatic training. Positioning the Institute as a learning organization is also an ongoing effort, one which will be at the heart of efforts in the current and future bienniums.

A. Results-based management

60. In 2009, a task team on results-based management was formed. It first developed a blue print on how to operationalize results-based management at UNITAR as it pertains to programme planning and budget; human resource management; programme monitoring and evaluation; results-based communication; and internal results-based management training and capacity development. As indicated in the present report, the implementation phase for some of these items pertaining to planning and budgeting, in particular, began in 2008.

61. One of the results-based management "building blocks" pertains to monitoring and evaluation. Following the recommendations of the Board of Auditors in 2006-2007, a monitoring and evaluation section within the Institute's research department will be created in the second half of 2009. Its role will be to systematize evaluation for learning at UNITAR, and to support a cyclical system of planning such that evaluation results are reflected in future programme planning.

B. Quality development

62. Since 2009, in terms of quality development,[7] UNITAR is in the process of analysing how the "International Organization for Standards Quality Management, Assurance and Metrics", which represents a generic model for introducing quality approaches in learning, education and training, can be applied to the Institute's

[7] "Quality development" in this context refers to a set of quality assurance mechanisms.

realities. This process will continue through 2010 to analyse the adequacy of the model to the Organization's requirements. In parallel UNITAR, with several other institutions, including United Nations system agencies and national accreditation authorities, engaged in a consultative exercise conducted by the European Foundation for Quality in eLearning to consider the Open ECBCheck — a new accreditation and quality improvement scheme for e-learning programmes and institutions in the field of international capacity development. In particular, during 2009, the Institute will pilot this criteria scheme in two of its e-learning courses so as to provide feedback to the group of core agencies participating in the round of consultations.

63. Furthermore, a number of concrete measures are taking shape and will apply to materials developed by or for the Institute. These measures include the establishment of eminent advisory boards (per thematic area and as required) that will review and approve new course content. For example, and mindful of the call made in General Assembly resolution 62/210, in the case of peacekeeping curricula, content development will be systematically scrutinized by an advisory board comprised of eminent specialists and practitioners in the field of peacekeeping, both from within and outside the United Nations. Other measures will include partnerships with renowned academic institutions that will co-certify UNITAR training material, and by contracting pre-eminent scholars for course content development.

C. Technology for learning

64. UNITAR is also investing to sustain technology-enhanced learning activities. Apart from increasing the offers for its e-learning training catalogue, which will soon include a series of courses in the Spanish language (see sect. II), the Institute will incorporate a broader use of technology-enhanced learning tools to improve the learning experience for its beneficiaries. Capitalizing on technological tools for learning, UNITAR is incorporating greater flexibility in order to respond to different learning profiles and needs, including through non-linear courses, guided learning and guided self-assessment tools, peer-to-peer assessments, and collaborative activities. Some of these pedagogical features were incorporated in an online course UNITAR recently launched in the area of governance in urban sanitation. The vision is to capitalize on technology as an enabler for learning. In doing so, UNITAR intends to support effective and independent learners, and to foster a sustained and positive attitude towards lifelong learning.

D. Core diplomatic training

65. Owing to its legacy as an Institute assisting developing and least developed countries in the fields of multilateral diplomacy and international cooperation ("core training programmes" as it is referred to in its Statute), UNITAR has continued to offer core diplomatic training in United Nations locations. Biennially, UNITAR trains close to 4,000 diplomats worldwide, of whom 60 per cent represent developing regions and 40 per cent developed regions. However, and as outlined in resolution 62/210, to date, UNITAR is totally self-funded and does not receive any

66. In 2009, the Secretary-General recommended that UNITAR receive an annual subvention from the regular budget in the amount of $600,000 to address the deficit in core diplomatic training owing to its unique nature and narrow beneficiary base, in order to avert the negative consequences that could entail should the Institute cease to offer multilateral diplomacy training (see A/63/592). In March 2009, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, recognizing the importance of core diplomatic training, recommended the approval, on an exceptional basis for the biennium 2010-2011, of an annual subvention in the amount of $600,000 (see A/63/744). In the resumed session of the Fifth Committee, in late March 2009, Member States decided to defer decision on the matter (see A/C.5/63/L.41).

VII. Recommendations

67. In the context of current efforts to explore strategies on how best to leverage and build on the strengths of the United Nations training and research institutes, UNITAR can play an important role in laying the groundwork for more efficient training and research service provision within the United Nations system, in particular given the synergetic effect of the current joint leadership of UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College. Member States should support UNITAR in this endeavour.